SUNDAY TIMES

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OF INDIA

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Punjab chief minister **Bhagwant Mann** seeks a meeting with President Droupadi Murmu for 'recall' of 7 AAP MPs who joined BJP, P 12

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Amid scorching heatwave, power demand hits peak

Power consumption in India hit 252.1 GW on April 24, up from 240.1 GW a day earlier, pushing electricity consumption to a record lev-

▶Heat keeps people home, shopper footfall falls, P 4

el, driven by soaring temperatures and rising use of ACs across sectors. The previous peak was 249.9 GW in May 2024. With harsh heatwave conditions forecast for the next week, the IMD also issued safety guidelines and urged citizens to take necessary precautions. P 11

Daily newspaper reading must in K'taka schools

All schools in Karnataka must allot 10 minutes daily for newspaper reading after morning prayer, following a proposal from Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights. Its chief Shashidar B said the move aims to curb excessive mobile use and improve general knowledge, vocabulary, and awareness. P 3

YouTuber held for 31-year-old murder

Delhi Police arrested a YouTuber for kidnapping & murder of a boy 31 years ago. Salim Khan jumped bail in 2000 & changed his name to Salim Wastik. He was recently signed for a Bollywood biopic. P 13

Kushner, Witkoff trip off, says Trump; Iran min leaves Pak

US Prez: We Have All The Cards, They Can Call Us

Islamabad: Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi left Islamabad on Saturday after holding discussions with Pakistan's top civil and military leadership on the regional situation and the US-Iran ceasefire, ending the possibility of a second round of US-Iran talks this week.

As Araghchi left Pakistan, President Donald Trump announced that US negotiators Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner will no longer be going to Islamabad for talks with Iran, contending that Washington held all the cards on the matter. **Asked by US media outlet Axios whether that meant a resumption of hostilities, Trump said: "No. It doesn't mean that. We haven't thought about it yet."**

Araghchi, who arrived in Islamabad late on Friday, met Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, the Iranian embassy in Pakistan said on X, but did not provide details of their discussions.

Trump told Fox News that it's not worth the US delegation making the 18-hour flight to Pakistan. "I've told my people a little while ago they were getting ready to leave, and I said, 'We have all the cards. They can call us anytime they want, but you're not going to be making any more 18-hour flights to sit around talking about nothing'," he said.

"Besides which, there is tremendous infighting and confusion within their 'leadership'. Nobody knows who is in charge, including them," Trump posted on Truth Social.

Araghchi is now headed to Oman. This was supposed to be the second round of talks after the first on April 11-12 ended without a deal. "Araghchi met Munir in a formal huddle and discussed matters concerning peace talks with the US," a govt official said. The Iranian delegation "reviewed bilateral matters" with Sharif, the Iranian embassy said.

Araghchi described his Pakistan trip as "very fruitful" in a post on X, adding he had shared Iran's position on a "workable framework to permanently end the war".

"Have yet to see if the US is truly serious about diplomacy," he said. Even before Trump's announcement, the prospect of new talks had been uncertain, with Iranian state TV saying Araghchi had no plans to meet with the Americans, and that Islamabad would serve as a bridge to "convey" their proposals. AGENCIES

▶Min may go to Russia, P 16

'US SEEKS FACE-SAVING WAR EXIT'

- Ahead of Trump-Xi summit, **US sanctions one of China's largest private oil refiners**, Hengli Refinery, citing its purchases from Iran
- Amid ceasefire, **4 killed in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon**, while Israeli military says Hezbollah had fired rockets at Israel
- Iran's defence ministry says **America is seeking a 'face-saving' way** to exit war
- Iran resumes **commercial flights from Tehran's international airport** for the first time since the conflict began about 2 months ago

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif with Iran minister Abbas Araghchi

FM signals Covid-style relief, asks industries to make in India

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday signalled fresh Covid-era style policy support to cushion the impact of the West Asia conflict, while urging India Inc to step up investment and replace imports with domestic manufacturing.

Deloitte. presents THE ECONOMIC TIMES AWARDS FOR CORPORATE EXCELLENCE

At the ET Awards for Corporate Excellence, Sitharaman said the govt is working on support measures for sectors hit by supply disruptions and rising input costs due to West Asia conflict.

"There is also a discussion on support similar to what was given during Covid under the emergency liquidity credit guarantee scheme, something of that order for most units that have been affected by raw material supply disruptions, rising prices and insurance risk," she said.

On FDI, FM acknowledged recent outflows and some weakness in inflows, arguing that investment decisions are not driven purely by economic indicators but also by "other considerations", including global and strategic factors, even as India is the fastest-growing major economy with stable indicators. On changes to capital gains tax and securities transaction tax, demanded by some businesses, Sitharaman said strong inflows were recorded even when both taxes were in place and stressed she was "neither saying yes nor no", indicating it is under review.

Andhra CM Chandrababu Naidu received the Business Reformer of the Year award from FM Nirmala Sitharaman

▶Source crude, P 13

'Sebi should lead in one nation, one KYC'

Nirmala Sitharaman urged Sebi to take the lead in setting up 'one nation, one KYC' initiative. For long, the Centre has been working on a process to have a unified system under which the requirement for repeated KYC is eliminated. P 7

India's 1st 'swadeshi' bullet train to roll out by April 2027

Suchith Kidiyoor & Anush S | TNN

Bengaluru: India's first indigenously designed 'bullet train' or high-speed train is set to be rolled out by April 2027 and will serve the Mumbai-Ahmedabad route.

On Saturday, railways minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** inaugurated 'Aditya', a dedicated high-speed rail manufacturing complex at BEML's Tippasandra campus in Bengaluru. The unit is purpose-built to support production of B-28 trainsets, which form the backbone of India's "swadeshi" high-speed rakes.

Vaishnaw said detailed project report (DPR) for the Bengaluru-Chennai High-Speed Rail Corridor is almost complete, marking significant progress in India's next phase of 'bullet train' expansion, after Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor.

He said the Bengaluru-Chennai high-speed route is expected to cut travel time to just 73 minutes, while the Bengaluru-Hyderabad corridor could reduce travel time to around two hours.

▶100 coaches, P 6

HC clears Ranveer, asks him to visit deity in 4 wks

Bengaluru: Karnataka high court Saturday quashed proceedings against Bollywood actor **Ranveer Singh** after accepting his revised undertaking to visit the Chavundi deity as an act of atonement for his mimicry of the deity's depiction in the film Kantara-1.

Justice M Nagaprasanna indicated that the plea would be disposed of, adding that a detailed order will follow, directing the petitioner to visit the deity within four weeks.

At the hearing, senior advocate Sajan Poovayya, appearing for Singh, submitted that he had filed an unconditional affidavit stating he will visit the temple, though without specifying a date. TNN

▶Harsh caution, P 4

4 new members join Niti Aayog under VC Lahiri

In Niti Aayog's biggest ever overhaul, govt has named economist Ashok Lahiri vice-chairman & appointed 4 members including AIIMS Delhi director M Srinivas. Rajiv Gauba is the only continuing member. Appointment of new CEO is under discussion in policy circles, with school education secretary Sanjay Kumar emerging as a main contender. P 7

Bangalore Times

Bangalore Times LOUNGE

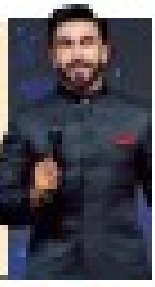
GEHRAIN AND WITTEN

'We always think of growing together'

Trailer for KD: The Devil pulled down over 'uncertified content'

Buzzstop

RANVEER SINGH SUBMITS UNCONDITIONAL APOLOGY IN KANTARA MIMICRY ROW



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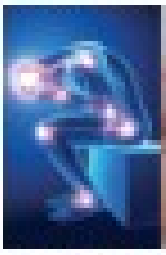
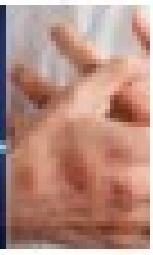
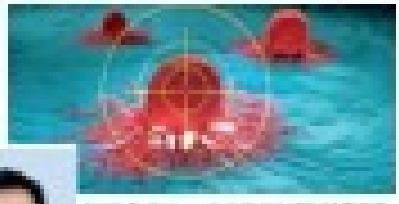
He who has health has hope; and he who has hope has everything - Thomas Carlyle

Don't delay treatment for arthritis and autoimmune diseases: Expert





From radical surgery to precision surgery: Expert

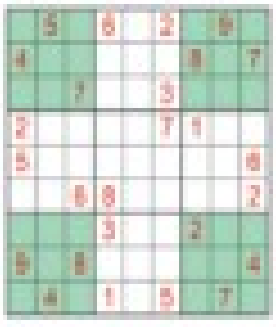


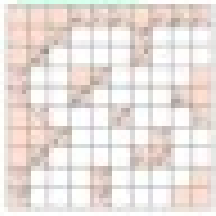
Rishab Shetty inaugurates jewellery brand's new outlets in Jayanagar and HSR Layout

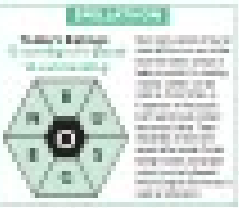
Bizarre

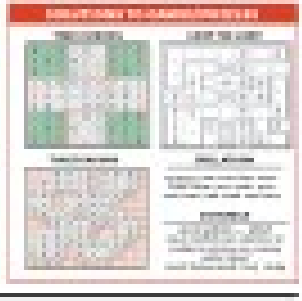
Elephants at a Chinese theme park turned out to be humans

LEISURE









Karnataka mandates newspaper reading for schoolkids

SruthySusan.Ullas
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Bengaluru: Children across all schools will now be required to spend 10 minutes each morning reading newspapers during the assembly, following a directive issued by the department of school education and literacy.

In Dec, Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights had written to the school education department proposing the initiative. The additional chief secretary of the department subsequently directed the commissionerate to examine the matter. The letter highlighted concerns that, in today's digital era, children are increasingly engaged with the internet, entertainment content, and social networking platforms. It noted that excessive mobile phone usage is linked to issues such as memory loss, hearing impairment, and reduced interest in physical activity among children.

"Therefore, if children develop the habit of reading newspapers for at least 10 to 15 minutes every day in schools, it will be helpful in preparing for competitive exams, increasing general knowledge of current affairs and improving vocabulary, language style and writing skills," the letter noted.

AI

CATCH 'EM YOUNG: Govt schools have been ordered to implement newspaper reading for 10 minutes daily after morning prayers

In this context, the director of primary education has ordered all schools to implement the practice of compulsory reading of Kannada newspapers for 10 minutes every day after morning prayer time in schools. This is applicable for all govt, aided and unaided schools in Karnataka and in residential schools, hostels/child-care institutions run by govt.

> **It can be any newspaper. The purpose is to inculcate the habit of reading newspapers, it can be any paper of their choice**
>
> **SHASHIDAR B,** Ex-chairman, Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights

Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights former chairman Shashidar B said: "In this digital world, there will be developments every day that children should know about. The commission felt that it is important for children to know what is happening in the world in fields like politics, science, technology, sports and world events. Saying so, we wrote to govt. There have been discussions and action has been taken. It is now important that teachers are made aware of the new decision and district-level officials ensure its implementation."

Transferring Bescom power connection a few clicks away

Helped Over 5k Property Owners So Far

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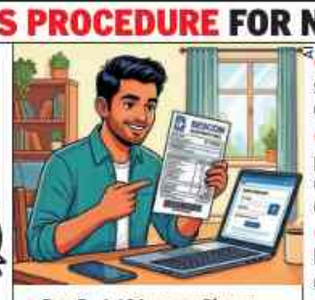
Bengaluru: Riding on the successful rollout of the e-khata campaign by Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) across all five city corporation limits, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) has simplified the process of transferring electricity connections into property owners' names by integrating its portal with the GBA database. This enables property owners to complete the transfer online in under 10 minutes with just a few clicks.

Under the e-khata system, key details such as property number, customer ID, Aadhaar number, phone number and email ID are verified and recorded. Bescom now leverages this authenticated data to seamlessly transfer electricity connections — from builders to buyers or from previous owners to current holders or deceased parents to children, for a fee of about Rs 1,300 towards stamp paper, indemnity bond and service charges.

Though the service is yet to be formally launched, a soft rollout over the past few days has already shown promising results, with more than 5,000 property owners completing transfers.

QUICK, SEAMLESS PROCEDURE FOR NAME CHANGE

- After successful e-khata mutation at GBA, server autogenerates SMS with request ID to property owner with a link for ownership change of electricity connection
- Click link, login to Bescom portal and authenticate
- Your property details retrieved from GBA will be displayed for verification
- Pay processing fee of Rs 100 & click on Go Back to Application link
- Click on e-sign link and an emSigner page will pop up. Read digital agreement, indemnity bond details and click proceed



- Pay Rs 1,194 on emSigner page either through UPI, credit/ debit cards or netbanking
- Authenticate your digital signature using Aadhaar enabled e-KYC
- Redirected to Bescom's portal, download e-signed documents, bonds and click Office Memorandum link
- Confirmation SMS will be sent once process is completed
- Your name will appear in electricity bill from next billing cycle

> We received several complaints wherein consumers were forced to submit several documents, visit division offices, spanning over a week. People neither had time nor were they aware of requirements. Hence, people ended up paying over Rs 10,000 to middlemen for transfer of connection. But there is no scope for such intervention as the entire system is completely faceless and transparent
> **— A Bescom engineer**

"We received several complaints regarding transfer of connection wherein consumers are forced to submit several documents, visit division offices, spanning over a week. People neither had time nor were they aware of requirements. Hence, middlemen or touts were encashing on the situation and people ended up paying over Rs 10,000 for transfer of connection. But there is no scope for such intervention as the entire system is completely faceless and transparent," said a Bescom engineer.

How to go about it

N Shivashankar, managing director of Bescom, explained: "The moment a property owner gets his/her e-khata, they will receive autogenerated SMS from the Bescom server about their e-khata and a link to facilitate the transfer of electricity connection. If you click on the link, it will land on Bescom's portal and require an OTP authentication. Subsequently, all your khata details along with previous (builder's) name will pop up on the screen. After verifying all the names and details, if you click on e-sign document, a digital stamp paper and indemnity bond will appear on the screen. You need to facilitate the signing through Aadhaar-based authentication and pay the required fee to complete the transfer."

Gaurav Gupta, additional chief secretary, energy department, said, "Due to this advanced system, consumers can change their names online without visiting Bescom subdivision offices in GBA limits. The process is simple, fast and completed without human intervention."

Energy minister KJ George added, "This is one of the several initiatives of the energy department aimed at providing quality services to our consumers using IT. Property owners with e-khata mutation under GBA jurisdiction can change electricity connection name from anywhere. In the coming days, this facility will be extended to city municipal corporations, town municipal corporations, town panchayats and gram panchayats."

Download e-khata with SAS property tax ID

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Nearly 13 lakh property owners in Bengaluru can now download their e-khatas online using their SAS property tax ID, eliminating the need to visit civic offices. Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has enabled this facility through its e-Aasthi platform.

Users can log in to the portal, authenticate via OTP, enter their SAS ID and generate the e-khata within minutes. The system also sends download links via SMS and WhatsApp

Officials said users can log in to the portal, authenticate via OTP, enter their SAS ID, and generate the e-khata within minutes. The system also sends download links automatically via SMS and WhatsApp to registered mobile numbers.

The move is part of efforts to streamline property documentation, which has traditionally involved multiple visits, paperwork and delays.

A valid khata is essential for paying property tax, securing loans and carrying out transactions such as sale, transfer, or mortgage.

GBA chief commissioner M Maheshwar Rao said the initiative was aimed at eliminating "red tape" and ensuring access to records anytime, anywhere. It is also expected to reduce reliance on middlemen and curb corruption, with citizens advised to use only the official platform, he further said.

However, officials clarified that these e-khatas are issued on an "as-is-where-is" basis and remain provisional.

Property owners must complete Aadhaar-based e-KYC, update sale deed details, add GPS-tagged data and link Bescom services for full legal validity.

Resident booked for abusing census officials

Bengaluru: A resident of an apartment in RT Nagar has been booked for allegedly abusing and hindering census officials earlier this week.

According to the complaint filed by a census officer from Bengaluru North City Corporation, the incident occurred on April 20 at an apartment complex in Ganesha Block, RT Nagar. The FIR was registered Saturday at RT Nagar police station. The officer alleged the resident used abusive language and interfered with govt work. Based on the complaint, police filed an FIR under BNS sections, including for obstruction of public servants and misconduct with them during work. TNN

21-year-old student crushed to death under bus wheels

Bengaluru: A 21-year-old engineering student died after a BMTC bus mowed her down on Srinivasapura main road near Uttarahalli Saturday afternoon. The victim is Shirisha NR, a final-year student in Channasandra.

Shirisha was riding her gearless electric scooter by the side of the BMTC bus. Accidentally, the two vehicles brushed each other, throwing Shirisha on to the road. She came under the right rear wheel of the bus and died instantly, police said. Bus driver Chandrashekhar was booked. TNN

2 women thrash youth outside Koramangala pub

Bengaluru: Two women thrashed a youth outside a pub in Koramangala block V, even as patrol officers tried to intervene on Thursday night. Sources said the man was beaten up after he allegedly harassed them inside the pub.

Police warned the women against taking the law into their own hands and asked them to file a complaint, but both sides declined, an officer said. A video of the incident has gone viral. TNN

Wild tusker scares many, hurts woman at picnic spot

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A woman escaped with minor injuries when a wild elephant, looking for drinking water, suddenly stormed into the midst of tourists at Sangama, the scenic confluence of Arkavathi and Cauvery rivers in Bengaluru South district Friday afternoon.

Sangama, a popular picnic spot, is around 100 km from Bengaluru.

A video of the incident shows the tusker rushing towards the river and tourists screaming and running helter-skelter. A middle-aged woman failed to notice the elephant as she was facing the opposite direction.

TOI

The jumbo had come looking for water at Sangama, the scenic confluence of Arkavathi and Cauvery rivers in Bengaluru South

Before she could realise, the elephant pushed her aside with its trunk and moved forward.

"Fortunately, the woman sustained minor injuries. If the elephant had trampled her or hit her with its trunk, she would have sustained serious injuries," sources said. The woman was taken to a local govt hospital where she was treated.

There were more than 100 tourists, including women and children, when the tusker appeared. Many of them who ran away left behind their lunch boxes, water bottles and packed clothes on the riverbank.

"The elephant, surprised by the crowd, dashed away with its trunk held upwards and tail curled, towards the jungle on the opposite bank. There, it stood for nearly 20 minutes before vanishing into the jungle," sources said, adding, "The tusker had come to drink water, but it was a rare incident as elephants do not visit this particular place, frequented by tourists."

With GLP-1 generics making debut, docs warn of ocular risks

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A 60-year-old woman with poorly controlled diabetes was started on a glucagon-like peptide (GLP)-1 drug to improve glycaemic control and aid weight loss. While she initially responded well, she developed sudden vision loss after eight to nine months and was diagnosed with non-arteritic anterior ischaemic optic neuropathy (NAION), also known as eye stroke.

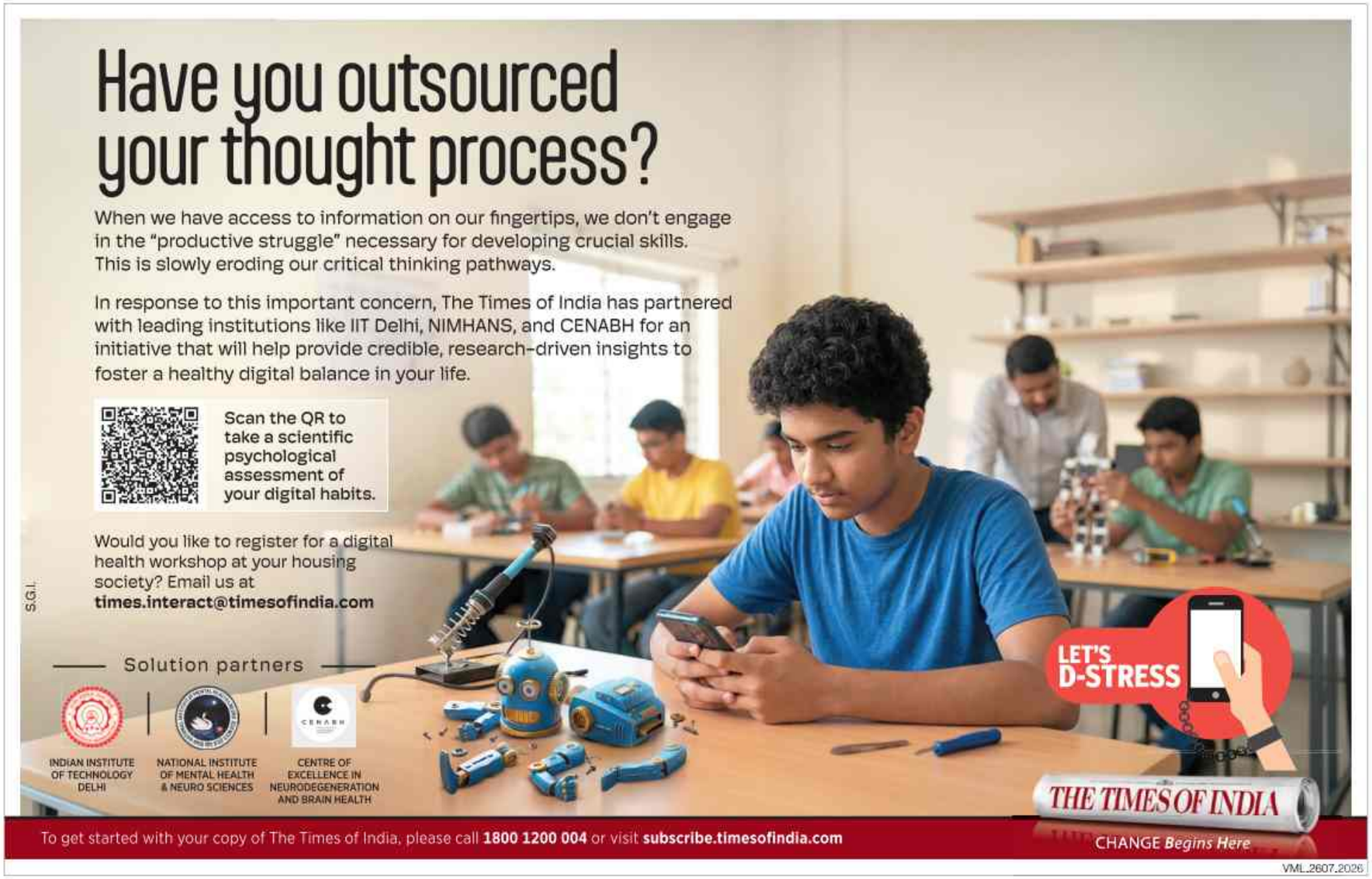
GLP-1 drugs, widely used for diabetes management and weight loss, mimic the natural hormone to regulate blood sugar, slow digestion and reduce appetite. With domestic generic versions entering the Indian market, ophthalmologists are flagging potential ocular risks.

Dr Divyansh K Mishra, VR ocular oncology and vitreoretinal specialist at Sankara Eye Hospital, said, "One of the most commonly observed is the progression of diabetic retinopathy, a diabetes-related condition affecting the retina. There is also a potential risk of eye stroke, specifically a condition called NAION. In such cases, the optic nerve is affected, leading to sudden vision loss."

Dr Preethi Sridharan, vitreoretinal surgeon at Nethradhama Super Speciality Eye Hospital, said, "Other complications include vitreous haemorrhage — bleeding inside the eye — and further progression of retinopathy, potentially resulting in significant visual decline."

Doctors emphasise India-specific data is needed to study risks. They also caution that the drugs alone cannot be blamed as some individuals are inherently more susceptible. Dr Adarsh S Naik, medical director and vitreoretinal surgeon at Vasan Eye Care, said, "Patients with pre-existing diabetic retinopathy or poor baseline glycaemic control, long-standing diabetes are at higher risk of developing complications."

Dr Rohit Shetty, clinician and translational scientist and director of Narayana Nethralaya, said, "It should not discourage the use of GLP-1 drugs in patients where they are medically indicated. Patients should be stratified into low-, medium- and high-risk categories."



YOUR POV

Here's what everyone at ETimes is on POV

The film set of Ugly gets ready to welcome Ajay Devgn

Ajay Devgn will be seen in a pivotal role in Ugly, a film that is being directed by Abhyuday Chhabra. Produced by Ajay Devgn FFilms and Panorama Studios, the film is set to release in theatres on March 31, 2023.

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Colour story

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Religion: Hindu
Language: English, Hindi and Tamil
Education: MBA

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Groom's Name
Age
Native Place
Community
Religion
Language
Education
Occupation
Annual Income
Contact Number

Email ID

Please send your profile to the above email ID

Georgia finds new ways to spread positivity as a chef

Chef Georgia Levay is a Michelin-starred chef who is known for her unique approach to cooking. She has been using her platform to spread positivity and has been doing so in a variety of ways.

ROOH AFZA ROOH MAIN
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INDIA KI RAG-RAG MEIN
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Chikkaballapur janivara row: Mom seeks re-exam for son

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A Brahmin body sought strict action against the institution, while a student's mother demanded re-examination after her son's 'janivara' (sacred thread worn by Brahmins) was allegedly cut by college authorities at a CET centre in Chikkaballapur on grounds of enforcing rules.

The Karnataka Brahmin Mahasabha has written to chief minister Siddaramaiah, seeking cancellation of the licence of the private college concerned and a minimum fine of Rs 25 lakh. The student's mother, a single parent, said the incident affected her son's performance and that she will approach the SP and deputy commissioner. "My son scored 90% in PU. Because of this incident, he was unable to write the exam properly. The higher education minister should help my son. He should be allowed to take a re-exam. If not, at least grace marks should be awarded," she added.

Terming the incident "unforgivable" and "inhuman", health minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said action will be taken against those responsible. "The inhuman act of asking students to remove their ear studs, bangles, hijab or sacred thread, and even cutting long sleeves with scissors, thereby affecting their morale, is unacceptable and condemnable," he said in an X post.

As heat keeps shoppers at home, traders see 30% drop in footfall

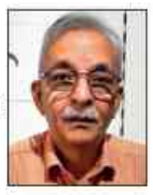
Afternoon Biz Collapses In City's Markets

Vindhya.Pabolu
@timesofindia.com

Chethan Shivakumar

TOO HOT TO HANDLE: Afternoon heat appears to be emptying commercial stretches in the city, with shoppers largely avoiding the 11am–4pm slot

"Footfall has dropped by around 25% over the past month ... we're often sitting idle until 5pm or 6pm. Restaurants are struggling even more as customers are not coming in, and on top of that, issues like the LPG crisis are adding to the pressure



Suhail Yusuff | SECRETARY OF BRIGADE SHOPS' & ESTABLISHMENTS' ASSOCIATION

Bengaluru: With temperatures soaring across the city, traditional retail hubs are witnessing a sharp dip in activity, as shoppers choose to stay indoors and avoid daytime heat. Traders in bustling markets such as Chickpet, Commercial Street and Brigade Road say the impact has been immediate and visible, with thinner crowds, shorter visits and a noticeable decline in impulse buying.

According to traders, shopper footfall has dropped by 30-50% over the past few weeks, with the sharpest slump seen between late morning and afternoon hours. Bengaluru's maximum temperature is hovering around 35 degrees Celsius while the actual feeling (of heat) is much higher these days. Many shopkeepers pointed out that the heatwave has coincided with the ongoing wedding season — typically a high-revenue period — but the expected surge in sales has failed to materialise this year.

Retailers say women, who form a significant share of their customer base, are particularly avoiding stepping out during the day. Even weekends, which usually bring in steady crowds, are seeing only a marginal uptick. Those who do venture out are limiting their time outdoors, often making quick purchases and leaving without browsing.

Yogesh Sheth, owner of N Vinod Kumar and Company, a wholesale store in Chickpet, said, "Our sales have come down by around 15% as customers are not stepping out of their homes. Shopping is not even on their list right now. Usually, women customers form a large share, but the heat has been so intense that we are seeing very few customers between 11am and 4pm. Weekends are slightly better, but that is not enough to sustain the business."

Prakash Chand Pirgal, president of Bangalore Wholesale Cloth Merchants' Association, said, "Because of rising heat, footfall across markets has dropped by nearly 50%, severely affecting business. Many are avoiding stepping out even on weekends because of the harsh weather. Normally, since it is marriage season, traders have higher expectations, but the heat is taking a toll on sales."

Traders say operational challenges have also increased, with some attempting small measures like offering drinking water, but acknowledging that there is little they can do to offset the larger impact of extreme weather conditions.

Mayank Rohatgi, secretary of Commercial Street Association, said, "At present, we are giving water bottles to customers to help them cool down, but beyond that, we do not know how else to accommodate them. We cannot put up tents or shelters as people come from all directions. We can only hope for the sun to go down. Vendors across the market have raised concerns about falling footfall, with sales dropping 15-25%."

Trade activist Sajjan Raj Mehta said: "The afternoon sales have completely dropped. Suddenly, all the streets have become empty, and it feels like Chennai's weather has shifted here. On top of that, the ongoing civic works have affected businesses as roads like BVK Iyengar Road to Balepet, Mamulpet Main Road, and RT Street on Abhinay Theatre Side are closed. People are becoming more health-conscious and are refusing to step out in this heat."

2 months of water stress?

TOI

SUMMER STEPS: Ballari cops keep their canine squad cool with special care, including giving tender coconut water

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karnataka could face drinking water shortage over the next two months as heatwave conditions worsen, rural development minister Priyank Kharge said while announcing Rs 45 crore to manage the crisis in rural areas. "I am seeing such heatwave conditions in the state after many years. Water levels in borewells and reservoirs are falling, and there could be severe drinking water shortage," he said.

The minister said funds have been released to districts for urgent measures such as tanker supply and hiring private borewells in water-stressed regions. "Ensuring access to safe drinking water during summer is a top priority. This allocation is aimed at enabling swift, localised responses in water-scarce regions. District administrations must act promptly and responsibly to ensure no village faces distress due to lack of drinking water," he added.

HC cites public safety, bins builder's plea

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: High-rise buildings featuring compact "pocket" apartments, regardless of the luxury they may offer, cannot be allowed to stand if they pose any risk to public safety—especially to residents themselves and to those in neighbouring areas. The high court made this observation while dismissing a writ appeal filed by Vishnu Sri Builders and Developers, Bengaluru.

This is grounded in the principle that private interests are subordinate to public interest and the common good. The exercise of such regulatory authority by local bodies is justified as being reasonably necessary to protect public health and safety, a division bench of Justice DK Singh and Justice TM Nadaf observed.

FIRE SAFETY

On Sept 3, 2025, a single bench ordered that the modified sanctioned plan for an apartment complex at Halagevaderahalli, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, be kept in abeyance until it is brought into conformity with setback requirements for residential development in Block A, as stipulated in the fire no-objection certificate of April 19, 2014. The court restrained the appellant-builder from undertaking any construction until such rectification is carried out and directed the then BBMP to demolish the structures erected within the setback area around Block A, Wing B, insofar as they pertain to development in Commercial Block B.

Rajasri Apartment Owners' Association approached the single bench challenging the modified plan on multiple grounds, including concerns that reduced access would hinder fire engines, other emergency vehicles, and ambulances from reaching the premises. In the writ appeal, Vishnu Sri Builders contended that no specific rules mandate setbacks exceeding eight metres and asserted that they had, in fact, provided an eight-metre setback. However, the bench, noted that the claimed setback had not been adequately maintained, with deficiencies on three sides.

Complainant sought court's 'harsh caution'

▶ Continued from page 1

The complainant, however, submitted that a definite timeframe must be mentioned. Responding to this, Justice Nagaprasanna said while disposing of the petition, the order will record a four-week timeframe for the visit.

The complainant further requested the court include a "harsh caution" in its order to deter other celebrities from behaving similarly. "Admonition definitely we will do. I will admonish," the judge said.

The case stems from a complaint filed by Prashant Methal, a resident of HBR Layout, over Singh's controversial imitation of actor Rishab Shetty and comments about Chavundi Daiva, a revered deity in coastal Karnataka, whom he reportedly referred to as a female ghost at the International Film Festival of India in Goa last year.

Pan-IIT summit on May 16

The Pan-IIT Alumni India Association, in collaboration with Karnataka govt, will organise the Pan-IIT Bengaluru Summit 2026 on May 16. The summit will be held on the theme 'technology sovereignty', principal secretary, e-governance department, Pankaj Kumar Pandey said.

Pan-IIT president Prabhat Kumar said the summit will feature high-level plenary sessions, panel discussions, and parallel tracks across AI, defence, semiconductors, energy, mobility, and healthcare. Selected startups will be connected with over 200 venture capitalists. A hackathon with 10,000 participants will work on real-world problems posed by the govt, he added. TNN

ART MEETS ARRIVAL @KIA

16ft sculpture proves instant hit

Mni.Thomas@timesofindia.com

TOI

ALL IN ONE
The unique sculpture blends languages, culture & creativity, lighting up the arrival forecourt of Terminal 2. It aims to celebrate city's global character

Bengaluru: Spanish artist Jaume Plensa's 16ft sculpture titled 'Bengaluru's Soul' at Terminal 2 of Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) became one of the most Instagrammable spots within minutes of being unveiled Saturday evening, offering travellers a "wow" moment.

Plensa's monumental work featuring interlaced ideograms of alphabets in Kannada, Arabic, Chinese, Tamil, Armenian, Korean, Greek, Hebrew, Thai, Hindi, Japanese and Latin, woven together with mathematical symbols, adorns the arrival forecourt of T2.

One of the world's foremost contemporary sculptors, Plensa offers a glowing tribute to Bengaluru's diversity, creativity and global outlook through this installation. Measuring 500 x 319 x 375cm, it aligns with KIA's vision of integrating art and culture into infrastructure.

"I have an irresistible urge to bring beauty into everyday life for communities who may not visit galleries," says Plensa, who has created landmark works in cities such as Chicago, New York, London, Madrid, Barcelona and Tokyo.

The installation, funded by Biocon Foundation, was unveiled by Juan Antonio March Pujol, ambassador of Spain to India. Addressing the media before the unveiling ceremony, Biocon group chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw described discovering the sculptor through works seen at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge and later in Barcelona, before eventually being introduced to him through a hospital.

After visiting Plensa's studio, Shaw invited him to India; he loved the country and agreed to create a major public artwork for Bengaluru. "It's a masterpiece that captures the spirit of a city where ideas, cultures and innovation converge. I hope people will appreciate this work," said Shaw, adding: "Public art humanises civic spaces and fosters a sense of identity. Building resilient cities requires not just infrastructure, but investment in culture and creativity."

WOW MOMENT FOR PASSENGERS

- **Jaume Plensa**'s sculpture 'Bengaluru's Soul' was unveiled at Kempegowda International Airport' s Terminal 2 Saturday
- Artwork features interlaced global scripts and symbols, celebrating Namma Bengaluru's diversity and cosmopolitan identity
- Installation funded by Biocon Foundation and unveiled by Spain's ambassador to India
- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw flagged the role of public art in shaping inclusive, culturally rich urban spaces

31,780 surgeries, 0 infections: Trauma centre of Victoria Hosp sets benchmark

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

File photo

RARE FEAT FOR FACILITY

Bengaluru: In a rare achievement for a govt hospital, the trauma and emergency care centre (TECC) at Victoria Hospital here has not reported a single case of surgical site infection since it began performing surgeries back in 2017. Between 2017 and 2025, the centre performed a total of 31,780 surgeries across various specialties — general, orthopaedic, plastic and neurosurgery.

FROM 2017 TO 2025

Total number of surgeries	OPD admissions	In-patients
31,780	4,49,551	3,21,404

Source: TECC; figures from 2017 to 2025

"We are probably the first institution to achieve zero-surgical-site-infection feat. This was made possible by our hygiene practices, appropriate antibiotic usage and continuous monitoring by our infection-control nurses department

Dr Asima Banu | SPECIAL OFFICER, TRAUMA AND EMERGENCY CARE CENTRE

A surgical site infection occurs at or near the area of surgery within 30 days of operation and can range from mild wound issues to serious, life-threatening complications, especially if not detected early. In govt hospitals, the incidence of such infections can range between 5% and 20%, depending on the surgical site. A report by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), released in 2025, stated the overall surgical site infection rate in the country was around 5.2%, while for orthopaedic surgeries, it was about 5.4%.

Dr Asima Banu, special officer, TECC, said: "This is a rarity, and we are probably the first institution to achieve a zero-surgical-site-infection feat. This was made possible by our hygiene practices, appropriate antibiotic usage, and continuous monitoring by our infection control nurses department." The centre's efforts are also expected to be published in medical journals.

To sustain this trend and to improve post-surgical care, TECC — which is affiliated with Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) — will be getting ICMR's Integrated Reference Diagnostic Laboratory (IRDL), a first for South India. The laboratory will enable faster and more accurate identification of infections, antibiotic sensitivity testing, surveillance of hospital infection trends and early detection of outbreaks. Dr Asima Banu said the lab is expected to be inaugurated soon.

TECC provides round-the-clock emergency treatment for critical cases, including accidents, cardiac events and severe injuries. In 2025, the 60-bed facility saw 70,993 outpatients and recorded 48,024 inpatient admissions.

मिर्गी दौरे

EPILEPSY/SEIZURES/FITS

R. S. RAM DIG Police, BSF, My wife Reshma used to suffer from multiple seizures in a month. I took her to several major hospitals and medical colleges, and prescribed medicines for years, which had numerousside effects and no relief. Doctors told me that these medicines would last a lifetime, and if I missed taking them even for a day, I would experience seizures. As soon as I saw an advertisement for Neeraj Clinic, I immediately made plans to go to Rishikesh (Haridwar). The Ayurvedic doctor there listened to me very carefully checked my wife and administered the first dose of the Ayurvedic medicine with his own hands, and congratulated me profusely. He instilled such confidence in my wife that she would recover that it was as if nothing had happened. I immediately started her on the medicine, and since then, she hasn't had a single seizure and is completely healthy. My wife and are also very grateful to the doctors and staff of the clinic. There is great power in Medicines and Prayers.

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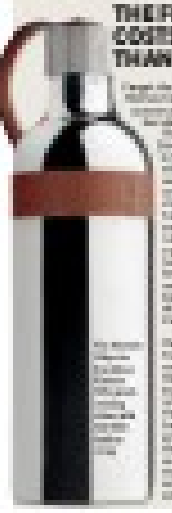

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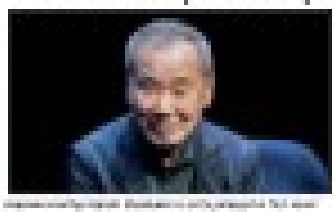
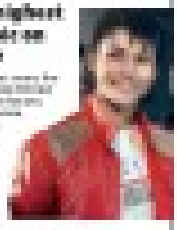


Michael becomes highest-rated musical biopic on the audience score



Jung Kook's motorcycle clip rides to first-ever #1 spot

Jana Nayagan leak: Film editor Pradeep Ragav suspended over rule violation

Vande Bharat sleeper to Mum by Aug: Min

Suchith Kidiyoor & Anush S | TNN

Bengaluru: The highly anticipated Vande Bharat sleeper between KSR Bengaluru and CSMT Mumbai will hit the tracks by Aug. Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in an exclusive interaction with **TOI** Saturday confirmed that the train will operate via Solapur and Kalaburagi.

For more than a decade, Udyaan Express has been the only train to Mumbai, taking more than 24 hours for a single journey. The journey time via Vande Bharat is likely to be around 15 hours. Services will start in evening hours so that the train reaches the destination at morning, sources say. Referring to India's first Vande Bharat sleeper between Howrah in Kolkata and Kamakhya in Guwahati, the minister said, "Super response from passengers. It's like 80% excellent and 20% very good — that is the feedback we have."

On plans for future, Vaishnaw said a third route had been almost finalised. "We will be running one Vande Bharat sleeper between Bengaluru and Mumbai sometime between July and August," he said. The railways is also planning a superfast train service from Bengaluru to Mumbai via Hubballi and Pune, the minister said, adding that it will feature LHB coaches.

Coach terminal won't impact wheel factory: Ashwini Vaishnaw

South Western Railway recently invited consultancy services for a proposed mega coach terminal at Yelahanka.

The project is planned near the Rail Wheel Factory. Ashwini Vaisnaw said the proposed terminal will not impact the wheel factory. The terminal, estimated to cost Rs 5,745 crore, will feature a multi-level coach terminal. It was initially proposed at Devanahalli but later shifted to Yelahanka due to logistical advantages and proximity to the city.

"Given the city's growing transportation needs, we are developing a mega terminal at Yelahanka. The Rail Wheel Factory will remain unchanged, with absolutely no alteration to its layout," Vaishnaw said.

Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inspects Aditya manufacturing facility in Bengaluru

'Airport rail link to be taken up shortly'

Inordinate delay in executing the 148-km Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project has drawn criticism from commuters, with the project — sanctioned in June 2020 with a six-year deadline — yet to take off.

Vaishnaw Saturday said the project has begun to gather pace after a technical expert was appointed to head Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company (KRIDE), the executing agency. He said the suburban rail link to Kempegowda International Airport will also be taken up shortly. On the 41-km Majestic-Devanahalli corridor, which includes the airport link, survey and geotechnical works have been completed, while land acquisition is in progress, he said.

M'LURU-B'LURU TRIAL RUNS SOON

Vande Bharat Express between Bengaluru and Mangaluru is now closer than ever, said Ashwini Vaishnaw while mentioning that trial runs along the route, which includes the ghats section, are expected to commence shortly.

"The first challenge was electrification because that section was a joint venture of state govt and railways, and as funds were not coming from the state, we decided to do the entire work from central govt funds. That's why it was delayed," Vaishnaw said.

Technical challenges

He said the route had several technical challenges due to the ghats sections. Considering steep gradients (rise or fall of tracks), the 55-km stretch between Sakleshpur and Subrahmanya Road required all trains to have an auto-emergency brake (AEB) arrangement. Unlike other trains, which run on external locomotives, the self-propelling Vande Bharat Express rakes were not equipped with AEB.

Awaiting safety nod

The ministry has now decided to retrofit the AEB system in the train.

"The trains have to be fitted with a particular device called AEB. That retrofitment has been done. Now we will provide Vand Bharat service to the entire coastal Karnataka, all the way from Madgaon (Goa) to Mangaluru and then from Mangaluru to Bengaluru," Vaishnaw said.

On when the service will start given the demand, the minister said, "After the trial runs are completed and we get safety certificates, then we can start."

B'luru facility to have annual capacity of 100 coaches

▶Continued from page 1

Aditya manufacturing facility will have an annual capacity of around 100 coaches. After inspecting the facility, Vaishnaw told **TOI** B-28 trainsets are being jointly designed by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) and BEML, with the design now completed and validated. "The facility is ready, and manufacturing will commence shortly," he said, adding the first trainset is expected to be rolled out around March-April 2027.

He said the BEML project marks a significant technological leap for India. "We are steadily moving up the learning curve. High-speed rail involves highly complex construction technology and demands extremely high precision in manufacturing. Safety requirements have to be very strong, too," he noted.

The minister said the first section of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor is nearing completion, with nearly 80% of the work already done. "Work will be completed by the end of this year, and the stretch is expected to be commissioned in 2027," he said.

BEML Limited was awarded a contract worth Rs 866.9 crore by ICF for the design, manufacture, and commissioning of two indigenous high-speed trainsets. The trainsets will feature a fully air-conditioned chair-car configuration, equipped with modern passenger amenities.

B'luru-Pune-Mumbai Link

Responding to demand for a Bengaluru-Pune-Mumbai high-speed rail link, Vaishnaw said it is also under consideration. "One high-speed rail project is under construction, while seven more are planned. In the long term, we are targeting a network of about 7,000 km," he said.

He said building an indigenous, "Atmanirbhar" 'bullet train' ecosystem is central to this expansion.

UNIFORM CARE, NATIONAL STANDARDS
5-tier crackdown on mental health issues

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

As discussions around mental health take centre stage across the world, state govt has rolled out Karnataka State Mental Healthcare Regulations-2026, which aim to standardise mental health services by classifying establishments into five distinct types — from standalone psychiatric hospitals and medical college departments to de-addiction centres and psychosocial rehabilitation homes.

"It is mandatory to devise regulations under Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. Mental health establishments have been divided into five categories as per govt of India guidelines. Our state regulations follow Central Mental Healthcare Regulations, 2020," said Dr Rajani Parthasarathy, deputy director (mental health), health department.

BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM: WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

CATEGORY A: Standalone mental health establishments
- Govt/private mental hospitals, psychiatric nursing homes included
- In-patient care (acute crisis, long-term care, substance use treatment)
- Comprehensive psychiatric services (diagnostics, medication, psychosocial interventions, rehabilitation)

STAFFING RATIOS: Psychiatrist: 1 per 30 patients (24x7 availability) | **Nurse:** 1 per 30 patients per shift | **Social worker/psychologist:** 1 per 30 patients (on call, if less than 25 beds) | **Medical officer:** On call | Yoga/occupational therapist: On call

CATEGORY B: Psychiatric departments of medical colleges
- Located in medical colleges with in-patient psychiatric wards
- Integrate clinical care with academics and research
- Care for psychiatric + physical co-morbidities
- Outpatient and emergency or crisis services

STAFFING RATIOS: Psychiatrist: 1 per 30 patients (24x7 availability) | **Nurse:** 1 per 30 patients per shift | **Social worker:** 1 per 30 patients | **Psychologist:** 1 per 30 patients (mandatory full-time) | **OT/yoga therapist:** 1 per 50 patients | **Medical officer**: On call

CATEGORY C: Psychiatric wards in multi-specialty hosps
- District hospitals, taluk hospitals, community health centres, District mental health programme units included
- Short-term to medium-term in-patient care
- Integrated psychiatric and physical healthcare
- Outpatient and emergency/crisis services

STAFFING RATIOS: Psychiatrist: 1 per 30 patients (daily visits + on call; services typically 8am-8pm) | **Nurse:** 1 per 30 patients | **Social worker/psychologist:** 1 per 30 patients (on call if less than 20 beds) | **OT/yoga therapist:** 1 per 50 patients | **Medical officer:** On call

CATEGORY D: Standalone de-addiction centres
- Dedicated centres for substance use disorder treatment
- Facilities under social justice ministry and rehab centres included
- Detoxification and withdrawal management
- Short-term to long-term residential rehabilitation

STAFFING RATIOS: Psychiatrist: 1 per 30 patients (daily visits + on call) | **Nurse:** 1 per 30 patients (round the clock) | **Social worker/psychologist:** 1 per 30 patients (at least one available round the clock) **OT/yoga therapist:** 1 per 50 patients | **Medical officer:** daily visits + on call (mandatory)

CATEGORY E: Centres for psychosocial rehabilitation
- Residential facilities for long-term recovery and community-based care
- Halfway homes, long-stay homes, rehab centres included
- Activities of daily living support
- Skill development and vocational training
- Independent living and social reintegration

Staffing ratios: Psychiatrist: 1 per 30 patients (weekly visits + on call) | **Nurse:** 1 per 30 patients per shift | **Social worker/psychologist:** 1 per 30 patients | **OT/yoga therapist:** 1 per 50 patients | **Medical officer:** 8-hour daily presence + on call at night

COMMON GUIDELINES FOR ALL GROUPS

- Accessible infrastructure with disability-friendly design
- Standard hygiene norms (fixed ratios for toilets, bathrooms, washbasins)
- Mandatory display of registration details, services and contact information
- Employment of qualified mental health professionals
- Maintenance of patient records, staff records and inventories
- Annual/periodic staff training
- Compliance with Central Mental Health Regulations, 2020
- Adherence to building and safety norms
- Access to emergency transport (ambulance services)
- Mandatory registration with Karnataka State Mental Health Authority and under Karnataka Private Medical Establishments Act, subject to inspections

May 10 milestone: DK brothers continue lobbying at Delhi HQ

Times News Network

Bengaluru: As chief minister Siddaramaiah nears three years in office on May 10, deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar and his brother DK Suresh have stepped up lobbying in New Delhi, meeting senior Congress functionaries and fuelling speculation over a possible CM change in Karnataka.

LEADERSHIP TALK

The two met AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge, senior functionaries KC Venugopal and Randeep Surjewala over the last two days. When asked about it, Shivakumar refused to divulge details. He just said it is the party's internal matter and he won't discuss with media. Party insiders said Shivakumar reiterated his claim to the CM's post, with his supporters pointing to an alleged rotational arrangement after the 2023 assembly elections. The high command has not officially confirmed any such understanding, though Kharge has made remarks on internal coordination.

DK Shivakumar, DK Suresh

Some functionaries view the Delhi meetings as Shivakumar's final push for the top post as he knows Siddaramaiah will call for a cabinet reshuffle to strengthen his position, while others see the talks as part of routine consultations.

100% confusion here: Jarkiholi

In Bengaluru, public works department minister Satish Jarkiholi said, "It is true there is 100 per cent confusion in the state Congress party. There is confusion over CM, deputy CM and cabinet reorganisation. We have requested the high command to resolve the issue. Everything will be set right soon."

Minister Priyank Kharge downplayed Shivakumar's Delhi visit. "What is wrong in meeting a Union minister (defence minister Rajnath Singh)? He has gone to discuss Bengaluru-related issues. Should he not meet leaders?" Priyank asked.

Speaker seeks review of dargah violence cases, triggers row

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A letter by assembly speaker UT Khader to home minister G Parameshwara seeking a review of cases linked to the 2022 Ladle Mashak Dargah violence has sparked a fresh political row.

Khader urged the govt to examine the cases and consider withdrawing charges against what he described as innocent Muslim youth. He contended that several people were wrongly named in the FIRs and said action should be taken to drop charges against those falsely implicated.

The speaker's request has drawn sharp reactions from Hindu forums, including Shiv Sena, which warned govt against any move to dilute the cases. Functionaries of these groups said the incident involved serious violence and cautioned that withdrawing cases could trigger protests.

Controversy in 2022

The violence happened at Ladle Mashak Dargah, a 14th-century Sufi shrine associated with Hazrat Sheikh Alauddin Ansari. The site has historically seen both Sufi Urs celebrations and Hindu rituals linked to Raghava Chaitanya Shivalinga located within the complex.

Tensions arose in 2022 after allegations that the Shivalinga was desecrated. Members of Hindu organisations went to the site to perform purification rituals, following which clashes broke out. Stone-pelting was reported, and several people, including a Union minister, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police and members of Hindu organisations, were injured.

Police later booked hundreds of people in connection with the violence.

Min D Sudhakar on ventilator

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Planning and statistics minister D Sudhakar is on ventilator support following a severe lung infection, with doctors set to decide on further treatment after he regains consciousness.

LUNG INFECTION

Chief minister Siddaramaiah visited him at Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) in Electronics City Saturday and said a call on the next course of treatment will be taken after medical evaluation Sunday.

"If a transplant has to be done, he must regain consciousness. All other organs are functioning well and he is stable," the CM said.

H5N1 op: Health dept says no human cases detected

Times News Network

Bengaluru: After completing a 10-day intensive surveillance and containment operation following the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) at the state poultry rearing training centre in Mathkuru village, Hesaraghatta, the health department Saturday confirmed no human cases of the infection have been detected so far.

The outbreak, first identified on April 14, prompted immediate deployment of state and district rapid response teams, along with local primary health centre staff. Authorities established a 0-3km infected zone and a 3-10km surveillance zone, while the animal husbandry department culled all birds and disposed of eggs and contaminated feed in line with biosecurity protocols. Health teams surveyed a population of 28,172 across 22 villages within the 10-km radius. Officials said nasopharyngeal samples collected from quarantined staff on day 5 tested negative for H5N1, while samples collected on day 10 are awaiting results.

The department directed healthcare facilities in Bengaluru to continue monitoring influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) cases, while ensuring adequate stocks of protective equipment and antiviral medication. Meanwhile, authorities have imposed a 90-day ban on poultry activity at the affected centre.

The public has been advised to avoid handling sick or dead poultry, ensure proper cooking of meat and eggs.

Internal reservation: BJP alleges injustice to some SC categories

Times News Network

BJP MP Govind Karjol alleged it could create divisions among SC sub-castes. Other BJP functionaries also criticised the govt over delays in recruitment linked to the implementation of internal reservation

Bengaluru: BJP Saturday came down heavily on Congress govt for reducing overall Scheduled Caste (SC) reservation from 17% to 15% and lowered allocations to key sub-categories, terming the revised internal quota formula "unjust to several communities."

On Friday, the cabinet led by chief minister Siddaramaiah approved internal distribution within the 15% SC quota, allocating over 5.2% each to right-hand and left-hand groups, and around 4.5% to other SC communities, including nomadic groups. BJP president BY Vijayendra said the revised formula reduces earlier allocations, alleging that Category 'A' quota has been cut from 6% to a little over 5.2% and Category 'B' from 5.5% to around 5.2%. He added that several communities have been grouped under Category 'C', with their share reduced to about 4.5% instead of 5.5%. He claimed the previous BJP govt had increased SC reservation to 17%, while the present dispensation had agreed to reduce it to 15%. Vijayendra alleged that implementation of internal reservation was delayed for over two-and-a-half years, affecting recruitment despite large vacancies.

BJP MP Govind Karjol questioned the basis of the cabinet decision, stating that the Justice H N Nagamohan Das Committee had recommended a higher allocation. He said earlier reports, including those by AJ Sadashiva commission and a cabinet sub-committee under former CM Basavaraj Bommai, as well as a Supreme Court directive, had not been reflected in the revised formula.

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P SADGUNA MURTHY

Managing Secretary
Gandhi Vidya Shala Educational Trust

Passed away on 11-04-2026

16th Day Ceremony will be held on 26.04.2026 @ 9am at Sri Dhondusa Munnabai Choultry Saibaba Nagar, Opp Aruna Theatre, B-21

You Live Forever in our Hearts

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Trustees, Teachers, Staff & Students of Gandhi Vidya Shala Educational Trust

IISc team, surgeon develop dissolvable abdominal stent

Chethan.Kumar@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: A small, dissolving tube developed in a Bengaluru lab is moving a step closer to hospital use, offering a way to avoid repeat procedures after major abdominal surgeries.

The device, called the Asthana Stent, is the result of a collaboration between liver transplant surgeon Sonal Asthana of Aster CMI Hospital and researchers led by Kaushik Chatterjee at IISc **(in pic)**, spanning its departments of materials engineering and bioengineering. It has now been licensed to Advanced Medtech Solutions Private Limited under an Indian patent, marking a shift from laboratory prototype to a product that could reach operating rooms soon.

The idea began with a recurring problem seen after liver transplants. Surgeons must join bile ducts, a delicate connection that can later leak or lead to narrowing. These complications affect 11% to 40% of patients and often require another procedure to fix.

Existing solutions rely on plastic tubes, or stents, to keep the duct open while it heals. But these either protrude outside the body and need careful management, or stay inside and have to be removed later through an additional procedure.

"The new stent takes a different approach. It is made from polydioxanone (PDS), a biodegradable polymer used in dissolvable surgical stitches. Once placed inside the body, it holds the duct open for about six weeks, then gradually breaks down and is absorbed. No removal is needed," the research team said.

Turning the idea into a working device required engineering work by Thaseeb Rehman of IISc's department of materials engineering and Saswat Choudhury of department of bioengineering. The team designed the tube to stay open under pressure and resist migration. The design used surface ridges and velcro-like hooks, while a flexible mid-section allowed placement even when duct openings were misaligned. Tiny radiopaque markers allowed doctors to track it using X-rays.

"Tests showed the stent could withstand more than 16 Newtons of pressure, well above what bile ducts experience. It also held its structure over six weeks in both lab conditions and human bile, covering the critical healing window," the researchers said.

With the technology now licensed, the focus shifts to manufacturing and approvals. The firm will take it through regulatory checks mandated by Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). The device has also received support from Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

If approved, the stent would be used during surgery itself, and will be available in multiple sizes. For patients, the benefit is straightforward: one operation instead of two, and fewer chances of complications after going home.

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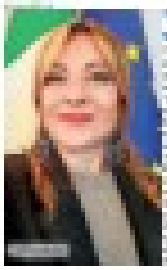
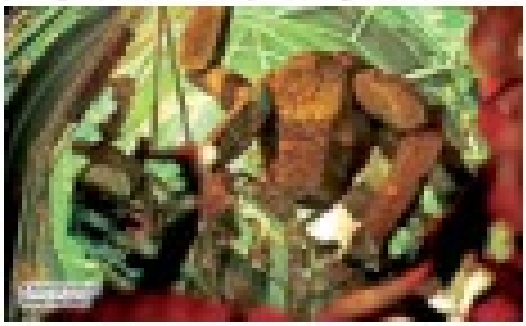
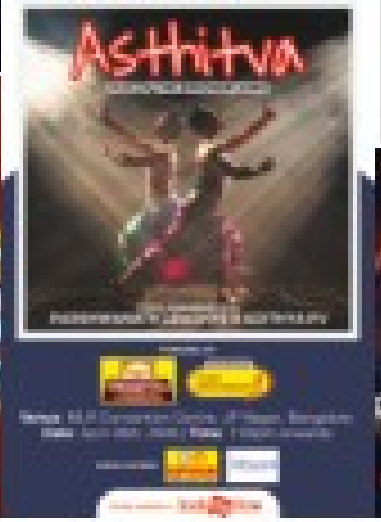


An Oscar for Rocky? Puppeteer of Project Hail Mary is eligible for one



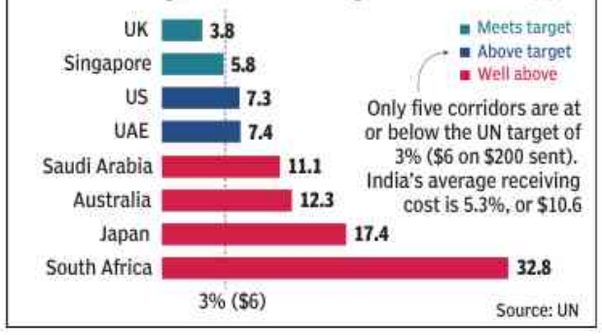


STATOISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Cost of remittances depends on where you send money from

Across 20 remittance corridors from various countries into India, the cost of sending $200 ranges from $3.8 (UK, 1.9% of transfer value) to $32.8 (South Africa, 16.4%)

Cost of sending $200 to India through select corridors ($)



One nation, one KYC need of the hour: FM

Urges Sebi To Take Lead For Fin Sector

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday urged markets regulator Securities & Exchange Board of India to take the lead in implementing the govt-initiated 'one nation, one KYC' process.

For long, the govt has been working on a unified know your client (KYC) system to eliminate repetition across services regulated by banks, mutual funds, stocks, bonds, insurance and pensions. However, the system is yet to be fully operational, causing inconvenience as users must complete KYC separately for different services. While Sebi has moved ahead, other regulators are seen to be lagging.

"We need a seamless, secure, and portable KYC experience across the financial sector," she said. "Sebi must help drive common KYC norms and simplification and digitalisation of KYC processes across the Indian securities market," she added at Sebi's 38th Foundation Day event.

Nirmala said govt has been working on a unified KYC system for a long time to eliminate repetition across services regulated by banks, mutual funds, stocks, insurance & pensions

"Sebi has the scale of investor participation, depth of digital infrastructure, and institutional credibility among peer regulators to take the lead. It is the shared responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure no citizen has to repeat the same verification journey across multiple financial products and platforms. We must work collectively with urgency," she said.

Sebi to simplify norms to boost business ease

Mumbai: Markets regulator Sebi will accelerate its drive to simplify and rationalise regulations to improve ease of doing business for capital market participants, its chairman **Tuhin Kanta Pandey** said Saturday. The regulator will collaborate to drive innovation for market development so that capital formation supports faster economic growth, he said, adding Sebi will continue investing in tech-led supervision.

At the 38th Foundation Day event of Sebi, Pandey said that despite a volatile global environment, India's market resilience reflects years of institution-building, sound regulation, and strong frameworks that have enabled sustained capital formation and market activity. TNN

In biggest revamp, 4 new members join Niti Aayog under Ashok Lahiri

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The govt has reconstituted Niti Aayog, appointing Ashok Lahiri as the new vice-chairman and four new members in the biggest overhaul of the thinktank since it was set up in 2015.

AIIMS Delhi director M Srinivas has been named a member along with science and technology secretary Abhay Karandikar and Chanakya University professor emeritus K V Raju.

Gobardhan Das, director of IISER, Bhopal, who had contested the 2021 assembly elections in West Bengal on a BJP ticket, has also been appointed a member, with Rajiv Gauba remaining the only member who was part of the previous team.

A revamp of Niti Aayog has been discussed ever since NDA returned to office in 2024, as the thinktank bore a jaded look with very few fresh ideas emerging from the building which once housed the Planning Commission.

The change began last month with B V R Subrahmanyam, who had been CEO for three years, leaving Niti. Who will be the new CEO is being actively discussed in policy circles, and school education secretary Sanjay Kumar is seen as a frontrunner.

ECLECTIC TEAM

- **Lahiri** is a veteran **economist** while **K V Raju** is a member of the Economic Advisory Council to PM and specialises in agriculture, water and rural management
- **M Srinivas** is a health specialist, **Gobardhan Das** will handle immunology & health
- **Abhay Karandikar** will handle science & tech; **Rajiv Gauba,** only remaining member of previous team, experienced in administration

The new look of team has a mix of experts from sectors across the economy from medicine to rural management.

Lahiri is a veteran economist with Raju, a member of the Economic Advisory Council to PM, specialising in agriculture, water and rural management.

Srinvas is a specialist in health, while Karandikar will handle science and technology and Das immunology and health. Gauba's rich experience in administration will provide critical inputs in policy formulation and revamp.

"Improving the quality of life of remote areas, the farming community, and the general public is essential for the overall development of the country," Das said in a post on X, while stating that it was a big opportunity for a Dalit coming from a family of farmers in West Bengal

"It is Prime Minister Modi's dream to make the nation a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047...To fulfil this vision, we need to ensure that proper policies are framed...I give credit to the earlier education policies of West Bengal, which played a big role in my appointment as the vice chairman of Niti Aayog...This is a big respect to the state of West Bengal," Lahiri said after meeting the PM Modi .

"Niti Aayog has emerged as a vital pillar in India's policy-making architecture, fostering cooperative federalism, furthering reforms and boosting 'Ease of Living.' It serves as a dynamic platform for innovation and long-term strategic thinking across sectors," Prime Minister Modi said in a post on X.

Kavitha revives 'TRS', declares war on KCR

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Hyderabad: Former MP and daughter of BRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), Kalvakuntla Kavitha, on Saturday announced the launch of her party — Telangana Rashtra Sena (TRS). By reclaiming the acronym once synonymous with her father's Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Kavitha has signalled not just defiance but a direct challenge to KCR's legacy, setting the stage for a bitter father-daughter clash.

Sources said the new name will be registered with Election Commission (EC) soon. While the application must be submitted within 30 days of the party being formed, it takes between three and six months to complete the process.

KCR rebranded the Telangana Rashtra Samithi as Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in 2022, marking his bid to step beyond state politics and enter the national arena. BRS party leaders said they would raise an objection with Election Commission against allotting the "TRS" title to Kavitha.

4 'dehydrated' tigers rescued amid heat stress

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Dehradun: Four tigers have been rescued from Uttarakhand's Terai West forest division this month with signs of dehydration and low glucose levels, prompting concern among forest officials over possible heat stress in wildlife as temperatures rise sharply. One of the animals had an abnormally high body temperature of 108F at the time of treatment, officials said, though they added that territorial fights and possible localised infection were also being examined as possible causes.

Of the four rescued tigers, one has already been released back into the wild, while two others are expected to be released next week after recovery. A video of one of the rescue operations, showing forest staff treating a distressed tiger, drew strong reactions on social media. PC Arya, divisional forest officer of Terai West division, said one of the tigers had dehydration and an eye problem, but added that the situation could not be linked to heat alone.

Passenger booked for misconduct at airport

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Hyderabad: A flyer on an IndiGo Hyderabad–Udaipur flight was booked on Friday for photographing female cabin crew in an objectionable manner and misbehaving with a fellow passenger at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in the city. The accused was deboarded and handed over to police.

According to a complaint filed by an IndiGo representative, Omprakash, the incident occurred at about 7.45am on Friday aboard flight 6E-6323 at the domestic terminal of RGIA. The airport outpost police said the accused is one Praveen, a businessman from Tamil Nadu who was seated in 6B.

The complaint stated that the passenger zoomed in on his mobile phone camera to take photographs of female crew members, focusing on their legs, faces and bodies. "The accused was also reported to have used foul and abusive language, and the passenger seated next to him complained about his behaviour," the complaint said.

Despite multiple warnings from the cabin crew, the unruly passenger continued to behave in a manner that made others on board uncomfortable; he was also drunk, the complaint stated. Finally, the crew deboarded the flyer and handed him over to the airport outpost police.

"On the complaint of the airline staff, we registered a case and issued a notice to the accused passenger as per law," K Harika, SI with RGIA outpost police, said.

Narayana Gurukula head dies

T'puram: Eminent philosopher, spiritual leader Muni Narayana Prasad, who headed the famed Narayana Gurukula, passed away early Saturday, sources said. He was 87. He breathed his last while undergoing treatment for a brief ailment at a private medical college hospital in Venjaramoodu here, said sources at Narayana Gurukula, a Varkala-based philosophical and educational organisation inspired by the teachings of saint-social reformer Narayana Guru.

A recipient of the Padma Shri in 2024 and Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for his contributions to literature and philosophy, Prasad was an engineering graduate before choosing the spiritual path. He worked in the state government service before joining as an inmate in Gurukula, founded by Sree Narayana Guru's disciple Nataraja Guru in 1923. Prasad later became the head of Gurukula following the demise of its then chief and prominent philosopher, Nitya Chaitanya Yati. An eminent scholar and a prolific writer, he wrote several books on various streams, especially on philosophy. PTI

Rent paid to relatives under lens as new HRA disclosure norms kick in

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Mumbai: Salaried taxpayers claiming House Rent Allowance (HRA) under the Income-Tax (I-T) Act will face tighter disclosure norms from April 1, 2026, with the introduction of a new declaration format, Form 124. This replaces the earlier Form 12BB and requires additional details aimed at curbing misuse.

Employees must submit this form to their employers for tax deduction at source (TDS). Those claiming HRA will now have to disclose their relationship with the landlord.

The key change lies in enhanced disclosures. Along with rent paid and landlord details — including the landlord's PAN if annual rent exceeds Rs 1 lakh — employees must now state whether the landlord is a relative and specify the relationship, such as parent, spouse, or sibling.

CURBING MISUSE

Govt officials said the move addresses long-standing concerns over bogus HRA claims within families, where no genuine rental transaction exists. By mandating disclosure of the relationship, the I-T dept will be better placed to cross-verify rental income declarations and flag mismatches.

Tax authorities have historically scrutinised HRA claims involving payments to family members, especially spouses or parents. Tribunals have upheld or dismissed such claims based on case-specific facts.

Officials clarified this is not a hardship, as genuine arrangements remain valid. Paying rent to a relative will still qualify for HRA exemption, provided there is actual payment through banking channels, backed by documentation such as rent agreement and receipts, and landlord declares the income in their I-T return.

AIIMS Delhi set to get interim chief

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New Delhi: The appointment of M Srinivas as a member of NITI Aayog has set off transition at AIIMS Delhi with an interim director likely to be named before govt appoints a full-time head of the prestigious institution.

With Srinivas's move to Niti Aayog, there is no immediate clarity on who will take charge. Officials said the selection of a full-time director could take several months, and in the interim, the institute is likely to be led by the senior-most faculty member, in line with past practice. Govt is expected to move quickly to ensure continuity, they added.

Names doing the rounds include senior faculty members such as Dr Nikhil Tandon, professor and head of endocrinology; Dr Radhika Tandon, chief, professor of ophthalmology; and Prof Sandeep Chauhan, head of cardiac anaesthesia department. "There are established conventions, but nothing is final yet. Typically, the senior-most person is asked to hold charge," a senior doctor said. Srinivas still had time left in his tenure. Taking charge in Sept 2022, he had succeeded Randeep Guleria.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
We are undertaking an investigation of the title in relation to certain immovable properties more fully described in the '**Schedule**' hereto and hereinafter collectively referred to as '**Schedule Properties**'. The said title due diligence is being conducted for and on behalf of our Client, who is desirous of entering into a joint development transaction in relation to the Schedule Properties. The present owners of the Schedule Properties detailed in the Schedule hereinbelow ('**Owners**') have represented to our Client that they are the absolute owners of their respective portions in the Schedule Properties and have unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.
Notice is hereby given to the general public that any person/s other than the Owners, asserting any right, title, charge, lien, claim/s or any interest whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Properties are hereby called upon to submit to the undersigned, their claim/s, if any, over the Schedule Properties or their objections, if any, to the aforementioned transaction. The said claim/s or objections must be in writing, together with documentary proof of such claim/s or objections, so as to reach us at the address given below within a period of **15 (Fifteen)** days from the date of publication of this Notice. If no such claim/s or objections are received within the aforementioned time period, it shall be deemed that no one else other than the Owners has/ have any right, title, interest or claim/s in respect of the Schedule Properties and our Client would be at liberty to proceed with the said transaction in connection with the Schedule Properties.
SCHEDULE
(Description of the Schedule Properties)
All that piece and parcel of the immovable properties, situated at Mullur Village, Varthur Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District, detailed in the table hereinbelow:

Sl No.	Survey Number	Extent	Boundaries				Name of the Present owner
			East	West	North	South	
1.	35/2	15 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 36	Land bearing Survey No. 35/13	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/3	Mr. Santosh Thazhathu, son of Late Dr. Mathew Thazhathu
2.	35/9	02 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/10	Land bearing Survey No. 35/1	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/16	1. Mr. Praveen Vasudeva son of Mr. N. Vasudeva Reddy 2. Mr. S. Pradeep, son of Mr. N. Somanna 3. Mr. V.R. Choudary son of Mr. V. Benarjee 4. Mr. Mullangi Sandeep Chowdary, son of Mr. M. Chandrashekar Chowdary 5. Mr. Thammineni Pavan Kumar, son of Mr. T. Sreeramulu 6. Mr. M. Manjunath son of Late Mr. Muniraju
3.	35/10	03 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/11	Land bearing Survey No. 35/9	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/16	
4.	35/11	06.08 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/12	Land bearing Survey No. 35/10	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/16	
5.	35/12	04.12 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/13	Lands bearing Survey No. 35/11	Lands bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/16	
6.	35/13	05.04 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/3	Land bearing Survey No. 35/13	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Lands bearing Survey No. 35/16	
7.	35/5	07 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/7	Land bearing Survey No. 42	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	
8.	35/7	07 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/6	Land bearing Survey No. 35/5	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	
9.	35/6	07 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/8	Land bearing Survey No. 35/7	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	
10.	35/8	07 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/1	Land bearing Survey No. 35/6	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	
11.	35/1	07 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/9	Land bearing Survey No. 35/8	Land bearing Survey No. 34	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	
12.	35/17	01.12 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/13	Land bearing Survey No. 35/11	Land bearing Survey No. 35/12	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	
13.	35/15	02.12 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/2	Land bearing Survey No. 35/12	Land bearing Survey No. 35/13	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	
14.	35/14	11.12 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/16	Land bearing Survey No. 42	Land bearing Survey Nos.35/5, 35/6, 35/7, 35/8, 35/1, 35/9, 35/10, 35/11, 35/12 & 35/13	remaining portion of Survey No. 35/14	1. Mr. Praveen Vasudeva, son of Mr. N. Vasudeva Reddy 2. Mr. S. Pradeep, son of Mr. N. Somanna 3. Mr. V.R. Choudary, son of Mr. V.Benarjee 4. Mr. Mullangi Chandrashekar Chowdary son of Mr. M. Chinna Basappa Chowdary 5. Mr. Mullangi Sandeep Chowdary, son of Mr. M. Chandrashekar Chowdary 6. Mr. Thammineni Pavan Kumar, son of Mr. T. Sreeramulu
15.	35/16	28.04 Guntas	Land bearing Survey No. 35/2	Land bearing Survey No. 35/14	Land bearing Survey Nos. 35/9, 35/10, 35/11, 35/17 & 35/15	Land bearing Survey No. 36	
	TOTAL	02 Acres 36 Guntas					

Sd/- **Mr. SRINIVAS B.R.**, Partner ,
DSK Legal,
Prestige Loka, No. 201, 2nd Floor, No. 7/1 & 7/7,
Brunton Road, Bengaluru – 560025, Tel: 080-69548770
Date : 26.04.2026
Place : Bengaluru

भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान तिरुवनंतपुरम
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
MARUTHAMALA P.O, VITHURA, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KERALA-695551. Tel. : 0471-2778017, 8070
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The program will commence from August 2026.
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Advt. No. 01/2026(Acad-MSc) DATED 26.04.2026 Registrar

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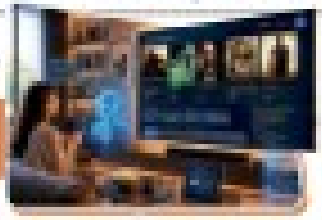
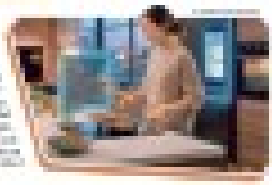
The great summer makeover





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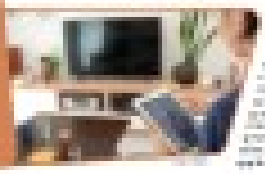

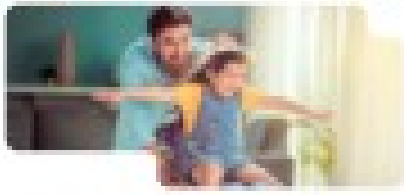

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BANGALORE PROPERTIES

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WANTED Anjanapura Banashankari 6th Stage JP Nagar Near Kanakapura Road Any Measurement Immediate Settlement Call: 9964627255

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Commercial 50x80 BDA Site for sale at Banashankari 6th stage, 1st Block 80 ft road Call:9845145329/ 9844039482

COMMERCIAL 50x80 plot N facing BSK 6th stg 7 blk 100ft Rd Nxt to TOPIC PUB Clear Title DIRECT OWNER registration Agent 8867417894

BANASHANKARI 6th STAGE 11th BLOCK, CLOSE to UTTARAHALLI MAIN ROAD, 40x60 SALE, Good Location. CALL : MANOJ - 9731410616

WANTED-BDA-SITES IN BANASHANKARI 6TH STAGE/ ANJANAPURA IMMEDIATE SETTLEMENT . CALL : 9343668888 / 9535575774.

SALE BDA EAST facing 30'x43.5' in BSK 1st stage Srinagar & DC conversion 40'x 70' N. facing sites in BSK 6th stg, for price call: 9845380312

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2400 SFT. 4 BHK, FULLY FURNISHED LUXURY FLATS
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OR FULL Building with 4 Units of 4 BHK & 2 Shops on Ground flr.Teak, Italian Marble, Jacuzzi, Gym, Cauvry Water & E Khata.

SALE Residential Site 40x60, @ Vijaya Bank Layout East Facing, Price 24K Negotiable. Brokers Excuse. Genuine Buyers Contact: 91106 64819

SHIVANAHALLI Ramakrishna Ashram Attach 3.4 Acers 8 Cr Akshayangr. 52x72 SEC 14000/-, 50x97 SF 12000/- Nego: 9449655947/ 6361162072

SITE for sale in Classic Orchids Layout Bannerghatta Road Genuine Buyers only. Call: Lokesh- "Aries property" 9741134782 / 9448065721

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BTM LAYOUT

PREMIUM COMMERCIAL PROPERTY
50X60 E/F
FOR SALE
@ BTM LYT

COMML PROPERTY Sale@ BTM Lyt "Going Cheap" Serious Buyers Only Call "GOLDLINE" 98450 33756/ 98450 85042

SALE: Park Facing Semi Comml BDA Plot, MICO Layout (2nd Stage BTM), G+1 Demolition house 1650 sft (30'X55') NF, 30ft Rd, Rs34,800/- per sft (5.75Cr nego), 9880075949, 7026001122, AgarwalEstates.Com

CUNNINGHAM ROAD

4BHK 3Balcony, 1unit/ floor, 3200Sft High end Flats Govianu Cunningham, 100mtr frm Cunningham Rd, Last 1unit avlb. 8088330330, www.govianu.com

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24360 Sq.ft gated Converted ekhata 21K builtup furnished 15AC Rooms Garden Solar 4kms before Prestige Golfshire 15Cr no-nego Ph:9677002197 OM

DEVANAHALLI Nandhi Hills Main Road Near Nandhi Upchar Hotel 2 Acres 14 Guntas Land For Sale Broker's Excuse Call: 98456 23970/ 97394 00838

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BUILDERS & DEVELOPERS
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DEVANAHALLI Approved Sites for sale near International Airport Size 2400, 4000sqft, 9740589739/ 97313083328

PRIME 30X40 Villa Plots in Devanahalli, Only last 10 Sites available for sale with STTR approved at 6800/- sqft contact NCR- 9731115176 / 9535060654

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AT Posh HBR (BDA) 5th Block 3BHK flats Newly Built ready to occupy with vastu & modern amenities. Good location. Close to Ring Road & Manyata tech park. 98450-07163 / 99723-70494

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8250 SFT Warehouse for Rent suitable for E Commerce & etc. in D C Halli Main Road, Bommanahalli.9663436944

HSR LAYOUT

HSR-WANTED-BDA-SITES And Houses 50x80 & 40x60 & 30x40 & 20x30 For Immediate Settlement Owners and Agent Call : 9343827680 / 9480238650.

LAST 2 Flats left At Posh HSR 2nd sec. Newly built & ready to occupy 2BHK flats with Vastu & Modern amenities for sale. Call : 98450-07163 / 80508-88648

SALE 30*40 PLOT,E-KHATA,SOUTH FACING,HSR SECTOR-01,1.5KM FROM BDA COMPLEX. PRICE-5.4Cr, PH.NO-9886302939/8792322815

INDIRA NAGAR

SALE
40*65
SITE

IN THE Prestigious Location of Indiranagar. Genuine Buyers & Sellers Call Shivanssh From Niti Estates 9900001973

HAL 2nd Stage. East-South Corner prime property 2460 sft Facing Park next to Indira Nagar Club. Cell 9845443283 stjoseph559@yahoo.com

INDIRANAGAR, off 80 Ft Rd 2nd flr – 3600 sq. ft. office space rent car parking & 100% power backup. North-facing PH: 9845427614 Agents Welcomes

INDIRANAGAR Prime Property Resid or Commercl 2500 Sq.ft Near to Metro Station & Also 30x40 3-BHK Dplx House 'SAAJJ'- 9343355898/ 9343415898

JAKKUR

FOR SALE
Semi Commercial
East Facing
5000 Sft PLOT
A Katha

NEXT TO Arkavathi Layout, Chokkanahalli, Rate 10,500/- Per Sq.ft. Contact Owner: 9886400201 / 9341257059

4000SQFT N/E Corner Plot For Sale Judicial Layout Jakkur. 40ft Rd on both Sides Buying commission Applicable Direct buyers only. WhatsApp Message only: 9663766492

JAKKUR Arkavathi BDA Layout 60ft Road 40x60 Site Sale Tele Com Layout 40x60 Site Sale Broker's Pls Excuse Call: 98456 23970/ 97394 00838

JALAHALLI

JALAHALLI - Prime Land Parcel @ Kamagondanahalli Circle. Corner Site. 60 Feet Frontage. 3600 Sqft, A Khata. High Growth Area. Serious Buyers Only For inspections & Details Contact: 9108988409

JAYANAGAR

PREMIUM PROPERTIES
SALE @
JAYANAGAR
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

30X40 30X50 40x50 40x60 50x80 45x90 60x80 60x90 80x120 100x100 100x150 Call "GOLDLINE" 98450 33756/ 98450 85042

PRIME
COMMERCIAL
SITES FOR SALE @
JAYANAGAR
4TH BLOCK
40x60 & 44x66

SUITABLE for Jewellers Sarees Showroom & Hotel Prime Locn SeriousBuyers only Call "GOLDLINE" 98450 33756/ 98450 85042

14000 sq ft comercial building for rent basement plus 3 suitable for office diagnostic service banks tutorial showroom on Kanakapura Road 7th block jayanagar contact 9845019485

WANTED Comml Building with land Area above 6000 Sqft Building 8000Sqft. NRI buyer for Medical Diagnostic Centre in South Bangalore: 7026500097

COMMERCIAL Property for SALE 20X20 West Facing in Jayanagar 4th Block G+3 flr suitable for Office Space Brokers Excuse. PH-7338229495

LUXURY Newly Built 3BHK Apartment for Sale in Jayanagar near South End Circle, 2200 to 2500 Sqft Each Flat. Ct: 9945265049/ 9738302049.

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Grand villa style entryway to Vastu aligned apartment with a balinese inspired gardens.
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PRIVATE VARANDA Space, RERA APPROVED, with 60+ Amenities. 800 meters to Silk Institute metro, Kanakapura road & Nice Road, Ct: 9743859000

SALE
PRIME COMMERCIAL
UNIT
1st FLOOR
4800 Sq.ft
@ J.P.NAGAR

RENTAL Income Rs.3.25Lac Price: Rs6.50Cr Prime Locn Genuine Buyers Call "GOLDLINE" 98450 33756/ 98450 85042

SALE: 1340 SQ.FT,2 BHK at Adarsh Gardens, 7th Floor, North facing. Call:9448314766/8971597766

JUDICIAL LAYOUT

4BHK, 4000 Sqft Luxury high end flats, Judicial layout gkvk, ONE Floor ONE Unit 100% floor FLAT Sale: 8088330330, www.govianu.com

KANAKAPURA ROAD

SITES FOR SALE
Kanakapura Road
Narayana Nagar
30x40, 40x43, 40x65,
Anjanapura BDA
30x40
Doddakallasandra
30x40

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KANAKAPURA-ROAD. Unique Opportunity to Acquire 3 Acres, Suitable For Plotted Development, Commercial Ventures. Clear Documents. Offered at a Attractive Price. Near Concorde Napa Valley. 300 Meters from Kanakapura Main Road 6.5 kms From Art of Living. For Details Contact ; 9844605003

3 BHK N F spacious premium flats 2400 sft for sale in BCMC layout Kanakapura road very close to vajarahalli metro station 1 unit per floor total 4 units call 9845012913

KANAKAPURA Road Vakil Garden City Gated Community 50x80 Corner Site Fully Developed near Metro Stationn A Khatha Jagadish: 9845010893

990SFT, N/F, 4BHK Tplx 2.30Cr, 30x42,1.60Cr, 1350Sft, 15000/- 1050Sft, 2BHK Semi frd flat 75L, 1500sft G+2, Home 3Cr Nr Y halli Metro- 9964652358

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KORAMANGALA.FLAT SALES.Prestige Acropolis 5Bhk 4600 Sft, 3Bhk 2300Sft, Dnr Spring Leaf 3Bhk 1885Sft G.Corp 3/4 Bhk. 98440 70163

KORAMANGALA 3rd Block, 3750 5 BHK HOUSE, 12000 Sft Built, 3750 Sft 4 BHK HOUSE,1st BLOCK 4200 Sft Old House. Call- 98440 70163

KUMARASWAMY LAYOUT

4BHK for rental in kumaraswamy layout Dayananda sagar College Road for office/Bank/Residential purpose M: 9663477722

MAGADI ROAD

3BHK, Luxury High End Flats Sale, Govindarajnagar Magadi Rd, Next to Royal Enfield shrw, OC received Last 2 units only, 8088330330, www.govianu.com

MALLESHWARAM

SALE :Commercial property on 16th Cross, Malleswaram,3,000+ sq. ft. land with 5,000+ sq. ft, building.Prime location, opp. TTD Temple.Excellent commercial opportunity.Call: 9448314766/9886419080

SALE 50x80 40ft Road Near Manthri Mahal old NKB Hotel Rd Malleshwaram Sampige Rd Semi Commercial Regionable Rate Ct: 9611844667 / 8123515830

FULLY Furnished 16,000Sft, A/C Showroom For Sale On Prime Busy Commercial Area, 8th Cross, Malleshwaram. Call: 9845358544 / 9448477419.

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700sqft
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Location:
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OCCUPANCY @ Main Kamraj Road professional layout, for all business owners PH:7483357234/ 9980797112

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FOR SALE - AREA -13068.Sft RESIDENTIAL LAND FOR SALE in Nagasandra Main Road towards Nelakadarana halli. Call: 90711 53337

OLD MADRAS ROAD

FOR SALE - 2BHK -1230 sq.ft at DISHA PURSUIT OF SUNSHINE, Budigere Cross Call: 9986507655/ 9035222547 www.chekkeraproperties.com

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Resurgent Spaces
Adarsh Lake Front RMZ
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2212sft 4.75Cr 9886078045

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PRESTIGE Fairfield - Available for Rent 3 BHK Vastu Compliant East Facing with all amenities and Two Car Parking. Contact 9632221623

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50*90
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SARJAPUR ROAD

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SITE FOR SALE
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RPC Layout
VIJAYNAGAR

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INDEPENDENT House 3BHK, 40*50/2000Sft, South East Corner, Near Sobha Hospital,Off Pategarpalya Main Road.99868 64000

VISVESWARAIAH LAYOUT

North facing
BDA 1264sft site for sale at 6th block,
Visveswaraiah layout
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SALE
2054sft
North East Corner
BDA Site

AVAILABLE AT Kommagatta, E Katha Price- 6750/- Negotiable Ready for Registration. Contact Owner 73533 04060

BDA SITES AVAILABLE
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20x30 NF 2nd Block,
30x40 SF 1st Block,
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1st Block, 40x60 EF
Semi Commercial
5th Block Ullal Main
Road Immediate Sale

WANTED: 20X30, 30x40, 40x60, 50x80 Residential/ Commercial Vishweshwaraih Layout BDA Sites (Owners). Call: 9845143579

BDA Site For Sale M Vjsveswaraiah Layout. 2nd Block South Facing 30x40 Good Peaceful Location Owner 9845294603.

BDA Site Sale 30x32 NF Jnanabharthi 2nd Stage Allotty Near Amma Ashrama, Back Side Park & 40x60 North SMV 2nd Block 9500/-. Call: 8970306030

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4BHK DUPLEX Luxury Yelahanka,Ramanshree California Gardens, 3300sqft, Price 8500/- sq.ft, CT: 9448122544/9980952919.

SEMI FURNISHED 9 Flats Ready To Occupy Near Mother Dairy, D-Mart All Amenities. Contact: 9844233244

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LAND FOR SALE
Prime Corner
LAND For SALE
GURGUNTEPALYA
Junction
Yeshwanthpur
TUMKUR ROAD
25,000 sft . BDA
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HILLTOP Farmland.. BALI THEME Buy 20 Cents (8720 sft) on 4000' Hill Top amidst forest Greenery.. near Denkanikottai @ 555/sft Cal: 9176054384 & visit

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6.27 acres residential
Land for Sale
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RICHMOND town Bangalore 6BHK ground floor apartment 4616sqft SBA 2 basement car parks. Can be used as residence or guest house or office. Contact 9341988400

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Mr. Shekar Tel : 98459 36521 or
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Expression Of Interest (EOI)

For Design, Development, Implementation, And Maintenance of Next Generation Origination Platform through four categories
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Category 2: BRE/BPM Category 3: Customer On-Boarding (Liabilities)
Category 4: Fintech API Services
Ref No: BOI:HO:IT(G&E): EOI:141, Dated 23.04.2026
The captioned EOI is available on Bank's corporate website www.bankofindia.bank.in under "Tender" section. Subsequent changes if any, will henceforth be uploaded on the Bank's website.
The last date of bid submission: 25.05.2026

VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
"Jnana Sangama", Belagavi - 590 018, Karnataka State.

Ref. VTU/BGM/SAP/CW1/05/T-742/2026-27/414 Date.25-04-2026

SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Registrar, VTU, Belagavi, invites (two cover systems) e-tenders for the following work through e-procurement tendering mode. Name of work: Tender for Supply of Laptops to SC/ST students of VTU PG Centres of Muddenahalli, Belagavi, Mysuru, Kalaburgi, Talakal and UBDTCE, Davangere under SCPS/TSP plan through VTU Fund. Amount put to tender : Rs.4,98,75,000/-. EMD Rs.7,50,000/-. Tender Pre Bid Meeting Date.28-04-2026 at 11.00 a.m. through online. Last date for receipt of tender 09-05-2026 up to 2.30 p.m. Date of opening of tender: 11-05-2026 at 11.00 a.m. The details regarding participation in the e-Tendring can be accessed by logging to our VTU website: www.vtu.ac.in and KPPP procurement portal website: www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.

Sd/- Registrar.
V.T.U., Belagavi,

DIPR/Belagavi/157/Manipal/2026-27

34001/116/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, CENTRAL (R&B) CIRCLE, BHUBANESWAR
Mail i.d seccbbsr@gmail.com
E-procurement Tender Call Notice No.01 of 2026-27
No. 2051 (Estg.) Bhubaneswar the 18th April-2026

The Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for Four number works to be received in online bidding, double cover system for Improvement works as detailed in: **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from **5.00 P.M. of 29.04.2026 to 5.00 P.M of 14.05.2026**. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at **5.30 P.M of 14.05.2026** in the Office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle Bhubaneswar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**.

Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/-
Er. M. K. Mahananda
Chief Construction Engineer
Central (R&B) Circle,
Bhubaneswar
OIPR-34001/34156/1/26-27/0001

कार्यालय–नगर पालिका परिषद्, नैनीताल

पत्रांक:- 120/XV-18 दिनांक:-25.04.2026

॥ सूचना ॥

1 डी0एस0ए0 मैदान वाहन पार्किंग, शुल्क वसूली ठेका वर्ष 2026–27 (E tender ID:- 2026_NPNTL_94035_1) विज्ञप्ति दिनाँक 08.04.2026 के संदर्भ में :–

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि नगर पालिका परिषद नैनीताल द्वारा प्रकाशित डी0एस0ए0 मैदान वाहन पार्किंग, शुल्क वसूली ठेका वर्ष 2026–27 (E tender ID:-2026_NPNTL_94035_1) दिनाँक 08.04.2026 के संदर्भ में निविदादाताओ से प्राप्त हो रही तकनीकि समस्या–*''दिनाँक 08.04.2026 को ई–निविदा आमंत्रण के समय E-Tender Sit में **Cover details Head** के अन्तर्गत **Document Type** pdf के स्थान पर jpg चयनित हो जाने के कारण* Bidder द्वारा निविदा में वाछित प्रपत्र (document) Online अपलोड नही हो पा रहे है'' का संज्ञान लेते हुए उक्त निविदा तत्काल प्रभाव से निरस्त की जाती है तथा उक्त ई–निविदा पुन: प्रकाशित की जाएगी।

अध्यक्ष,
नगर पालिका परिषद्, नैनीताल।

अधिशासी अधिकारी,
नगर पालिका परिषद् नैनीताल।

Orphaned twice: SIR strips Kol's Kerala-born man of vote, identity

Poulami.Roy@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Born into loss in Kerala, raised without memory of parents, and finding a home after decades of drift, 50-year-old Benjamin — "Benji" in Kolkata's Beleghata — says the state has made him an orphan again.

The EC's SIR of electoral rolls has struck off his name, snapping his only formal identity link as a voter. Meant to cleanse rolls, the exercise has left edge cases like his stranded between identity and proof, where lived family does not meet documentary thresholds. An orphan since infancy, Benji lost his mother at birth and his father soon after. After time in a Kerala orphanage, he ran away, joined a circus troupe, and at 21 was brought to Kolkata as a shop help. Months later, he was taken in by Jayanta Baral, who ran a fast-food stall.

Benji busy preparing a dish at his adoptive family's eatery in Kolkata

Since 1999, Benji has lived with the Baral family, calling octogenarian Padmarani Baral his mother. The arrangement gave him stability — and eventually, citizenship on paper. After years of persuasion, he applied for a voter ID before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and voted. He also holds a ration card. That fragile recognition collapsed during SIR.

In his enumeration form, Benji again named Padmarani as guardian. This time, officials did not accept the relationship. With no records of biological parents — names he cannot recall — his case stalled at a hearing and his name was deleted. "In my lonely life, I felt important for the first time during the 2024 LS election," he said. "After that, losing the right hurts more." Benji is now searching for a way back onto the rolls — through papers, affidavits and appeals — trying to prove he exists.

34001/118/2627

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
PHULBANI (R&B) CIRCLE, PHULBANI
Email:sernbphulbani@gmail.com
Letter No. 754 Dated 22/04/2026

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
Bid Identification No. CCE_R and B_PLB_01 of 2026_27

1	The Chief Construction Engineer, Phulbani (R & B) Circle, Phulbani on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE for construction of the **Bridge works** as detailed in the table below from eligible contractors.		
2	Nature of work	:	Bridge works
3	No. of tenders	:	One No
4	Tender cost	:	Rs. 10,000/- (through online) only.
5	Class of Contractor	:	A Class
6	Date & Time of sale & receipt of bids	:	10.00 AM of 29.04.2026 to 5.00 PM of 13.05.2026
7	Date of Opening of bid	:	11.00 AM of 14.05.2026
8	The Bidders shall have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**. Any addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason.		

RBCIRPLBN-ESTMT-MISC-0056-2026/2/2026

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
Phulbani (R&B) Circle, Phulbani
OIPR-34001/34129/1/26-27/0002

25001/52/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF
RURAL WORKS, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR
Letter No 13699, Dated. 20.04.26
Email i.d.: crew_bbsr@yahoo.com

"e" Procurement Notice for building works in Odisha (Online-01/2026-27 (Buildings), dt. .04.2026)

1. Name of the work : Construction of building (Block level stadium) work
2. Total No. of works : 06 (Six) nos
3. Estimated cost : Rs. 1231.82 to 1570.59 lakh
4. Class of contractor : "A" Class & "Special" class as applicable.
5. Period of completion : As mentioned in Column 7 of TCN.
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid identification No	No. of bridge works	Availability of tender online for bidding	
			From	To
Chief Engineer, Buildings & Bridges, Rural Works, Odisha, Bhubaneswar	Online-01 (Building)/ 2026-27	06 (Six) nos	30.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	22.05.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which will be available in website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- **Chief Engineer (Buildings & Bridges),**
Rural Works, Odisha, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-25001/25123/1/26-27/0002

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personal

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I Venkatesh Babu Ramachandra Nagaraj S/o. G R Nagaraj R/o A-G003, SS Signature, Ayyappanagar Mainroad, Hoodi, Bangalore- 560036, have changed my name to Venkatesh Babu for all purposes vide Affidavit dated 25.04.2026 Notary Bangalore.

I, Manjunatha R ,S/o Late Ramakrishnappa, Residing at No.121, Whitefield Main Road Immadihalli Opp Milk Dairy Bengaluru 560066, have changed my name from Manjunatha R to Manjunath R for all future purposes.Vide affidavit dated 25-04-2026 before Notary Veena J Bengaluru.

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'Bombs, burgers and the banality of evil — why should animals face brutal wars waged by inhumane beings?'

Billions of non-human beings are killed by explosions and implosions in wars whose violence we have grown to 'tolerate' — yet, their carnage does not originate there. It starts at your breakfast table, writes ***Srijana Mitra Das*** *in* ***Times Evoke****:*

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Photos: Getty Images & iStock

DO YOU KNOW WHERE MY HOME WENT? From Syria to Sudan, Ukraine to Iran, humans are busy unleashing weapons and wars which have destroyed the habitat and lives of the most innocent creatures on Earth

How strange the last few weeks have been, dear reader, the world trembling on the cusp of a war whose motivation remains unclear and duration unknown. As we behold the state of Iran, pummeled by bombs and breathing in short gasps between carnage and carrying on, a few things grow clear though.

The first is our startling tolerance for violence. While we spend hours discussing the price of oil, down to the last greasy drop, many have forgotten the children murdered in schoolrooms, the patients slowly recovering in hospitals brutally terminated, the lives of shoppers, buying bread and vegetables, suddenly ended by a missile. Their existence — full of the minute epics we all live, little romances and large struggles, hearts deep with love and yearning, layered minds full of learning, voices that hum beneath our breath, feet that move to the hands of a clock, humour like a warm glow, artful skills forming the tapestry of a joyful life — just gone.

They were taken by weapons unleashed by a West, restless for blood and profit. We have somehow learnt to live with these losses, accepting the cataclysmic ending of lives whose origins on Earth began six million years ago — over that vast time, human forms and powers evolved, developing to the point where we can sustain societies and innovate dreams to reality. Yet, we uneasily accept such life being crushed by powers that seek a few dollars more to add to their gazillions.

Why has violence become so banal, as Hannah Arendt wrote? Several industries make it so. The first is the military-industrial complex (MIC), spread globally with its head in the United States. This behemoth — bombs, warships, missiles, drones, rocket launchers, grenades, guns, tanks, mines — is entirely constructed to kill life, something that occurs uniquely on Earth and no-one can bring back. The existence of this industry should inspire more heated opposition but over the years, as slavery and colonialism grew — powered by gunpowder, an early MIC pillar — many were made accustomed to the idea that it was somehow sane for these weapons to exist, simply to steal others' wealth and lives. Often, such violence came with more than bombs and beatings — it carried an army of beguilement, which subtly underscored 'the white man's burden', teaching everyone English while robbing them senseless. Somewhere, between Shakespeare and civilities, colonial parties and their amenities, the reality that all this was based on pulverising life got blurred. It took Mahatma Gandhi to turn the focus back on the truth of such modernity — this was founded on violence alone. Only a rejection of that — with the good life it seduced many into — could free us.

CAT-PERSON: The iconic Holly Golightly finally only wanted her cat

In contemporary times, other industries turn violence banal. Think of the Iraq War of 1991, live coverage of which brought the sight of missiles and howitzers into our homes. Images, wrote Roland Barthes, carry more than one meaning — while American broadcasters may have wanted to convey the war's scale, these images, oft-repeated, had another effect. They carried what Barthes called the 'third meaning', an interpretation not always intended by, say, a movie director or actors but nonetheless understood by a viewer. Here, the 'third meaning' became the repetitiveness of violence, continuous cycles of shots which dulled our shock, images of heavy machinery which blurred the real lives underneath them. We grew visually accustomed to war's violence — and that strange tolerance continues today as the world swings, pendulum-like, between the 'on-off' quality of the war on Iran.

However, while humans at least know why missiles come raining down, some suffer their blows but never understand why. Think of the animals, birds and plants killed or hurt in war — there are few reports of their lives. Animals forced into 'military service' are somewhat better counted. Hence, we know eight million horses were killed in World War One, multiple camels, elephants, mules, carrier birds, etc., 'enlisted', army dogs served with bullets lodged by their heart, every animal experiencing poison gas, shelling and landmines. Pets had it no better. In World War Two, the British euthanised 7,50,000 of their domestic dogs and cats in one week, fearing food shortages — in the mind-boggling act of making evil ordinary, this was called a 'humane' gesture.

HE SAID IT: 'The greatness of a nation = how its animals are treated'

One wonders how that would go down today, given changes in the ways humans perceive pets. First, the word 'pet' no longer means only an animal we own — it could be a neigbourhood dog or cat whom kindly souls protect. Second, few now call themselves 'owner' of a pet — from a feudalistic tone (akin to 'Meet my tiger'), we have become 'pet parents' to Lucy, Snoopy or Muffin. The market for pet products — everything from pet balms to pet-friendly hotels — has expanded to $165 billion in the US, rising steadily from $3.6 billion in India as Indians become parents to over 32 million pets.

Now imagine a world where your pet is placed amidst war — think of the fear, confusion and lack of knowledge your innocent little one would go through, not even knowing why the lovely skies were suddenly blown apart. Imagine the physical pain and emotional suffering of an animal injured in war — and its loneliness if its family is gone, the starvation it faces with no-one to feed it, the misery of seeing its home destroyed. It doesn't bear thinking about.

Perhaps one way to make wars seem less normal, then, is to view them from the imagination of a pet. They are, after all, beings to whom we show our softest, most tender selves. Even the hard-edged social aspirant Holly Golightly, played beautifully by Audrey Hepburn in 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' was made humane by the pet she impudently called 'Cat', finding she could forsake diamonds but not that little being. Our pets bring out our most pure love. Why not oppose wars that hurt them?

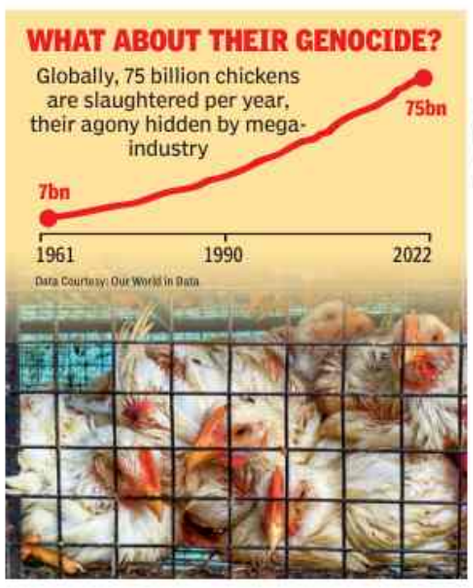
That brings me to the third industry which normalises violence — non-vegetarian food. Every day, millions of animals are culled in the global fight to get you your daily hamburger. This cruelty — animals kept in suffocating, painful conditions, injected with chemicals, ill-fed and physically harmed before being shoved into terrifying slaughterhouses — is smoothly veiled. You literally cannot see the blood or tears in the commercial sleight of hand Marshall Berman wrote of in 'All That Is Solid Melts Into Air'. The daily genocide of animals truly becomes air — all we see is a pizza with strips of a once-living being.

What does that do to our sense and sensibility? Does such violence, nestled at our breakfast table, play a role in the ethical chloroform we seemingly inhale when it comes to Iran, Sudan or Gaza? Can we really proclaim values like peace while chomping a leg piece? Do we actually stand for anything good — mainly, the protection of the cosmologies of life, beauty and wonder we Earthlings are blessed with — if we fall for the thrills of chicken wings?

The reason we think less about these questions is because in democratic living, the delicate world of ethics is pushed aside by the burly power of having a vote. That means perforce only human issues receive any attention — and the world of animals, so richly loved in Indian tradition, from the Panchatantra to the Jatakas, is ignored under heaps of elections and shrieks of politicians. Yet, if any nation can, India — home of the most advanced philosophies about the animal world — could change the tide. What if, for instance, we had a Rajya Sabha MP who spoke only for animals, birds and plants? Would we listen — and could we change?

Views are personal

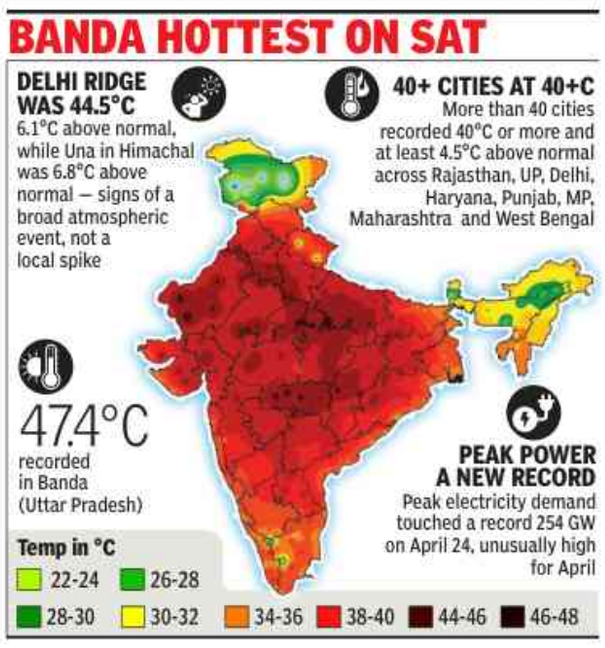
HOW DO WE DO THIS TO THEM? In WWII, as today, dogs were made to detect mines, often getting hurt



Peak power demand at record high amid scorching heatwave

Demand Touched 252.1 GW At 3.28 Pm Friday, Says Data

Atul.Mathur@timesofindia.com



New Delhi: India's peak power demand reached an all-time high of 252 GW on April 24, as temperatures soared across the country, pushing electricity consumption to a record level.

According to data from Grid Controller of India, electricity demand touched 252.1 GW at 3.28 pm on Friday, up from 240.1 GW recorded on April 23, driven by increased use of ACs in both domestic and commercial sectors. The earlier highest-ever demand was registered on May 30, 2024, when it clocked 249.9 GW.

With the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting a harsh summer this year, the power ministry has estimated peak power demand at 271 GW. With heatwave conditions gripping major parts of the country, officials said electricity demand and consumption are likely to surge further this month.

To put this in perspective, peak power demand in April last year was recorded at 235 GW. Due to milder weather in 2025, peak demand touched the year's highest level of 242.8 GW on June 12, though the power ministry had projected demand to reach 270 GW. Power demand crossed the 245 GW mark on Jan 9 this year due to intense cold conditions in north and northeast India.

As per data compiled by Grid India from daily reports of the National Load Despatch Centre, electricity consumption remained subdued till April 12 due to mild weather and sporadic spells of rain in north India, but has been steadily rising since April 13.

The demand this week proved the grid controller's forecast wrong, which had estimated a peak of around 240 GW on April 24. For the April 27 - May 3 week, it has projected demand to remain subdued initially but to rise to 246 GW on May 1.

Officials said demand may rise further as the IMD has indicated that heatwave conditions may develop in isolated pockets of j&k, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, and central India over the coming days. It added that hot and humid conditions are expected over coastal and eastern regions, while warm night conditions are likely in parts of north India. "These weather conditions will push electricity consumption across the country, and power demand may rise further, setting a new peak in the coming days," said an official. Temperatures may fall by 2-4 degrees early next week before rising again by mid-week.

15-year jail to man upheld for raping minor stepdaughters

Abhinav.Garg
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: A man who raped and molested his minor stepdaughters will serve out the 15-year prison term handed by a trial court, Delhi high court has said.

Dismissing the appeal of the stepfather, the court lamented the suffering the girls had to undergo and noted that one of the children passed away after he forcibly brought her home from hospital where she was undergoing treatment. The court said that words like "tragic and unfortunate" would belittle their trauma. "To add salt to the injury, their biological mother also seemingly acquiesced to the trauma... as she kept quiet," Justice VK Yadav said.

Police had prosecuted the mother for not reporting sexual assaults, but the trial court acquitted her. The high court the "testimony of the victims, particularly of victim 'K' is credible and trustworthy" and has been corroborated. The circumstances are "heavily loaded against the appellant... There is no escape for him," the court said.

Wife moves HC for death cert of man who 'jumped off Atal Setu'

Mumbai: The wife of a man who allegedly jumped off the Atal Setu has petitioned Bombay high court to seek a declaration that he is dead and for directions to the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation to issue his death certificate.

The woman (34), in her petition that came up this week but stands adjourned, said her husband, Karuturi Srinivas, jumped into the sea from the bridge in July 2024. Her plea, argued by counsel Anita Castellino before a bench headed by Justice R V Ghuge, said she approached the HC after three municipal corporations denied her relief, citing 'lack of jurisdiction'. Her lawyers sought a hearing of the petition, which was filed a few months ago, on April 23.

The Atal Setu bridge connects south Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. The woman in her plea said she was contacted by Nhava Sheva police who showed her the CCTV footage of a man jumping off and the car parked there, on the basis of which she identified her husband. The petition said that "despite repeated oral and written representations to all civic bodies and relevant govt authorities" she has not been issued the death certificate, resulting in "extreme hardship and mental distress".

The woman is facing financial difficulties and is compelled to depend entirely on her aged mother and extended family members for basic sustenance, her counsel contended, "solely" due to the non-issuance of the certificate; she is "legally entitled to receive various post-death benefits of her late husband", for which the death certificate is mandatory. The HC has posted the matter to July. TNN

Genetic defect that leads to breast cancer therapy resistance identified

Malathy.Iyer@timesofindia.com

MOST COMMON CANCER IN WOMEN

- Breast cancer occurs when breast cells grow out of control. It often starts in the milk ducts (ductal carcinoma) or glands (lobular carcinoma)
- It's the most common cancer in women, though it can affect men too
- It has over 90% 5-yr survival rates, when detected early
- According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, the incidence rate of breast cancer in India climbed from 13 per 1L women in 1990 to 29.4 in 2023
- In the same period, mortality rate increased from 8.9 to 15.5, marking a 74% rise in breast cancer deaths in India

Mumbai: Local scientists have identified a genetic defect that could explain why some breast cancer patients stop responding to standard hormone treatment after a year of starting treatment.

Led by Dr Amit Dutt of University of Delhi South Campus, who was formerly associated with Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), the study looked at hormone receptor-positive, HER2-negative breast cancer, which accounts for 70% of breast cancer cases in India — nearly two lakh new breast cancer cases are reported annually. The study was published in the British Journal of Cancer, an indexed medical journal.

HER2-negative breast cancer is treated with hormone therapy drugs such as tamoxifen, aromatase inhibitors and fulvestrant, which block estrogen that helps these tumours grow. These medicines are often effective at first, but in four out of every 10 patients, the cancer eventually becomes resistant, returns and is harder to treat, according to TMC director Dr Sudeep Gupta, who is an author of the study.

The team traced this "resistance" to the loss of a gene called CDKN1B, which produces a protective protein known as p27. They analysed tumour samples from 186 Indian patients and found the CDKN1B gene was damaged or missing in many women whose cancers stopped responding to the standard treatment. It was not seen in patients who remained sensitive to therapy. According to the study's main author, Suhail Ahmad, this pointed to a pathway of resistance.

The team confirmed the finding by recreating the defect in breast cancer cells in the laboratory. Once CDKN1B was switched off, the cells became resistant to hormone drugs. "But when the missing p27 protein was restored, the medicines started working again," said Dr Dutt. The discovery could lead to more precise treatment.

Defreeze bank a/cs of Rhea and kin: Court

Mumbai: A special court for Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) on Saturday ordered the defreezing of several bank accounts belonging to actor Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik, and mother Sandhya, ruling that Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) failed to comply with mandatory procedural safeguards. The siblings are booked in a drugs case that was probed following the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in 2020, **reports Rebecca Samervel**.

The orders, delivered by special judge U C Deshmukh, said, "Sub-section (2) of the Section 68F of the (NDPS) Act provides that an order of freezing or seizing the property shall have no effect unless such order is confirmed by an order of the competent authority within period of 30 days of its being made."

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INDIA DIGEST

US levies 123% anti-dumping duty on Indian solar cells

The US has imposed a preliminary anti-dumping duty of 123% on solar cells and panels imported from India, adding to existing countervailing duties of over 125%, effectively making shipments to the US economically unviable. On the other hand, National Solar Energy Federation of India's chief executive officer Subrahmanyam Pulipaka said the investigation by US agencies appeared fundamentally flawed and without logical basis.

Axis Bank Q4 PAT down at ₹7,071cr

Private sector lender Axis Bank on Saturday said it earned a net profit of Rs 7,071 crore for the Jan-March quarter of 2026, a marginal decline from Rs 7,117 crore it earned the same quarter of 2025. This dip came on the back of a jump in standard-asset provisioning, a voluntary decision taken to strengthen its provisioning framework, and also due to a drop in trading profits.

47 Bastar Maoists surrender in T'gana

Forty-seven Maoists of Dandakaranya Special Zone Committee have surrendered before Telangana police, DGP B Shivadhar Reddy said Saturday. Each cadre was provided immediate financial assistance of Rs 25,000, with additional incentives to be disbursed after verification.

Mann knocks Prez door to 'recall' defector MPs

Signatures On Letter 'Forged', Says Punjab FM

Vibhor.Mohan @timesofindia.com

Chandigarh: Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday ramped up its response to the defection of seven Rajya Sabha MPs, with Punjab CM **Bhagwant Mann** seeking a meeting with President Droupadi Murmu for their recall and a minister wondering if two of the signatures on the defection letter were "forged".

Mann said he would lead a delegation of AAP MLAs to the President to present the party's case, terming the defections a "betrayal of the mandate". Six of the seven MPs — Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, Ashok Mittal, Harbhajan Singh, Rajinder Gupta and Vikramjit Sahney — are from Punjab, while Swati Maliwal is from Delhi.

The party said it would argue before the President that switching sides undermines the democratic process and warrants a constitutional precedent for removing members who abandon the party under whose ticket they entered the Upper House.

However, the right to recall is not yet a law in India. Bills on this have not been passed in Parliament, and only a few states, like MP, have implemented a provision to recall sarpanches.

Punjab finance minister Harpal Singh Cheema, claimed the seven MPs cannot escape anti-defection law, alleging discrepancies in the defection letter. "Rajinder is getting treated abroad for bypass surgery, and Swati did not mention in her social media post on Friday that she signed the letter submitted by Raghav Chadha. We are confident that the vice-president will take a decision as per the Constitution, and these MPs will be disqualified," he said.

Defectors' move 'illegal': Sanjay Singh

Delhi: Despite the breakaway faction claiming they have fortified themselves legally with two-third of the party's members in the Upper House merging with BJP, AAP on Saturday announced that they will be writing to RS chairman C P Radhakrishnan to seek disqualification of members who crossed over a day ago.

AAP member in RS, **Sanjay Singh** highlighted that "the anti-defection law clearly states that no form of split is permissible in the assembly, Rajya Sabha, or Lok Sabha. It has no legal recognition. Thus, the defection of these MPs is illegal, incorrect, unconstitutional, and against parliamentary rules." **—Ambika Pandit**

EC transfers 4 cops in 3 Kol police stations

Kolkata: Kolkata Police on Saturday issued a fresh transfer and posting order involving four inspectors across three police stations in the city.

In an official communication, KP commissioner informed Bengal chief electoral officer that Gautam Das, inspector with the special branch has been posted as officer in-charge (OC) of Kalighat police station (PS). Subrata Pandey, inspector from the south division has been transferred as OC of Alipore PS.

In another reshuffle, Uttam K Paik, inspector with the Special Branch has been appointed as additional OC, Kalighat PS. Chameli Mukherjee, inspector serving as additional OC at Alipore PS, has been transferred to Ultadanga Women PS as OC.

The EC also announced its decision to rope in 11 more police observers for phase II polls on April 29 when polling will be held for 142 seats.

Among the new 11 police observers, three are for South 24 Parganas, two for North 24 Parganas, and one each for Hooghly, Nadia, East Burdwan, Howrah, Kolkata South, and Kolkata North. TNN

After recheck, Bengal turnout hits 93.2%, TN settles at 85.1%

Times News Network

Kolkata/Chennai: Bengal recorded a historic 93.2% turnout in the first phase of assembly elections, while Tamil Nadu's final provisional figure settled at 85.1% after a marginal revision, EC data showed on Saturday.

More than 3.36 crore voters cast ballots across 16 Bengal districts on April 23, out of a 3.6 crore electorate. Cooch Behar led with 96.2%, followed by South Dinajpur at 95.4%. Malda (94.8%), Jalpaiguri (94.7%), Birbhum (94.5%) and North Dinajpur (94.2%) also crossed 94%. Only Kalimpong (83%) and Darjeeling (88.9%) remained below 90%.

Tamil Nadu's turnout was revised down by .05 percentage points, accounting for 28,672 voters and pegging total votes at 4.87 crore. Figures remain provisional. EC ruled out any re-poll after scrutiny of 75,064 polling stations. Karur district topped at 92.6%, while Karur constituency led with 93.4%. Veerapandi in Salem followed at 93.4%.

Shah: 'Didi gets angry when I threaten goons. Must I embrace them?'

RohitKhanna @timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Union minister **Amit Shah** on Saturday responded to Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's threat to drag him to court for his "ulta latka denge" comment at poll rallies, saying a BJP victory will put an end to the "fear of goons" after May 4. He said after the poll "success", he would treat PM Narendra Modi to Burdwan's famed sweet, Sitabhog.

"Didi gets angry when I threaten goons. Should I embrace them?" Shah said at his rallies at Jamalpur in Burdwan and Shyampur in Howrah, asking the CM "to put a leash on her goons".

"In every election, hooligans backed by TMC disturb the polls through violence. So, at every rally, I caution these hooligans of dire consequences. I am now just issuing a note of caution. If the hooligans don't mend their ways, their place will be behind bars," Shah further said. "I am warning them again to stay indoors on April 29," he added.

Earlier, addressing a rally in Hooghly, Mamata had said: "We are going to file a legal case against Shah for his violent remarks. As a Union minister, he cannot make such comments." The CM had alleged that Shah's statements were directed at TMC workers.

BJP mics placed to disrupt meet: Didi, quits rally

Kolkata: Bengal CM **Mamata Banerjee** on Saturday discontinued a rally in Bhowanipore, alleging microphones set up for a BJP rally just 400m away were placed directly towards her TMC event to "drown out her voice".

"How is it possible to conduct a meeting like this? I have taken permission. Despite that, you see the attitude. Whatever they are doing forcefully to capture Bengal is wrong," she said.

As a visibly angry CM left the stage, saying she would move court against EC for attempting to block her meetings, the area became tense as hundreds of TMC workers gheraoed the Bhowanipore police station in protest. Central forces rushed to the spot.

Promising to return to the spot Sunday, the CM urged people to return TMC to office with a two-thirds majority. TNN

Rahul targets Mamata; TMC makes 'dog' jibe

Kolkata: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi sharpened his attack on CM Mamata Banerjee during his poll campaign in Bengal Saturday, asking why central agencies had subjected him to scrutiny while sparing her despite alleged scams surfacing in the state. TMC was quick to react, calling his remarks "irresponsible" and mocking that he had been "feeding his dog" when central agencies were hounding TMC seniors. TNN

IN THE COURTS

Cohabitation, childbirth not marriage proof: HC

Ahmedabad: Marriage cannot be presumed merely from cohabitation or birth of a child in a criminal prosecution for bigamy, Gujarat HC has ruled and upheld the acquittal of a man accused of entering into a second marriage during the subsistence of the first, reports **Saeed Khan**. The HC addressed the evidentiary value of the birth certificate of a child from the alleged second marriage.

JKCA scam: Court stays charges against Farooq

Srinagar: A sessions court Saturday stayed a magisterial court's order allowing framing of charges against National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah in the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association scam case. The court ordered the operation of a chief judicial magistrate's directive and the subsequent proceedings to be kept in abeyance till the next date of hearing. **— Naseer Ganai**

Chasing a consensual couple illegal: HC to cops

Prayagraj: Allahabad HC quashed an FIR against a young couple from Saharanpur who had married of their own free will, saying police were doing a "great disservice by registering FIRs such as these and, more than that, chasing the couple, sometimes with the ulterior motive to forcibly separate them and send back the bride to her family", reports **Rajesh Kumar Pandey**.

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It started with an easy coffee meeting arranged by our parents. The coffee turned lukewarm. Our conversation didn't. And somewhere along the way we both realised that this felt right.

MATRIMONIALS

WANTED BRIDES

BY CASTE

AGARWAL-BISA

WANTED Bride : Suitable MATCH invited for a 40 year Handsome, Highly qualified Baniya Boy Hails from a reputed business family of UP. The candidate is amicably divorced. Seeking a Hindu girl (any cast) from a cultured background. Divorcee or widow without child are welcome to apply. Money No criteria. Please send biodata and recent photographs to: sanjeevalag2206@gmail.com

29/5'10" B.TECH- IIT MBA-IIM, wrkg with MNC 1 Cr + Fathr Indus. Caste no bar. No demand Aff. fmly #8120991552 Em: bdmatj@gmail.com

BRAHMIN

USA-BASED, MS(Fin), 31/5'11", Sanadya Brahmin, well-settled professional, seeks well-educated, compatible girl, preferably USA-based or willing to relocate. Contact: 9425093237

29/5'10" B.Tech IIT,M.S.(Eng) GOOGLE wkg,1Cr+ Tetotaller Boy, Father Defence Officer,Elite family, Caste no bar, No dowry. 9226324317 rasrm68@gmail.com

NRI (Mumbai/UP) family seeks brahmin veg/ qualified/ beautiful/ tall/ fair/ slim girl for USA settled / 29/6.1', B.Tech/ MS/ MBA/ handsome boy. cont:+91 9930708494

VADAMA IYER Kousikam Uthiratathi-1 1993 M.Engg in Electrical Eng (Power Sector) Electrical Designer TESLA Fremont USA California Income: USD 1 Ct +971504782007

KKB boy Gotra Upmanyu 34/5'8"M.Tech CS, wkg MNC Bangalore. Father Retd. Judge High Court. Preff. equivalent match. Family bsd Lucknow. WApp 8299594224

HANDSOME Srswt Brahmin 31 yrs/6'/ High income, MBA (USA), Settled in India, From High status family, Caste no bar. Call 9115551721, 9464513311

GOVIND Sundaresan 11.04.1966 Bharani MS - Software USA. Seeking bride within 3yrs age differ, employed in USA. Ct : 9962341075

1996 Tamil Iyer Vadamal Kettai Vadhoolam B.E.(Mech) Design Engr, HITACHI ASTEMO, JAPAN Salary : 3 L p.m. Ht, Wt : 5'11" Ct : 8277607767

SUITABLE Match for Boy, sept 91, 5'10", Never Married, BBA, Gaur Brahmin, Own Transport Business, Mumbai, 9820101342

SMART garhwali BR 35/5'5" BE (Mech) & MA (London) Dir in MNC/ CTC 2.7Cr seeks PQ wrkg girl at London. Fathr Retd Col. # BHP 9599838827

GOWDA

A 44-year-old well-settled businessman from the Gowda Community is seeking a suitable life partner. Contact: 9036604418

JAIN

29/5'10" B.Tech IIT,MBA(IIM) wkg with GOOGLE,1Cr+ father mfg Ind'lst, aflunt family, One child, Caste no bar, No dowry # 9172878985 al67jn@gmail.com

KAYASTHA

SM for 29/5'8", Master's from Aachen Univ & wrkg as Simulation Engr in Germany. Younger son of edu. Kyastha fmly from UP; Father retired Class-I Railway Officer and Mother a leading Psychologist. Seeks Professionally Qlfd girl from cultured fmly #9147746262

MS (USA) B TECH AUG1984/5'8 Wrkg in USA Contact: +91-8700384012, +91-7505282738. Email: shiv0384@gmail.com

PQSM4 Delhi based Mathur Boy, May96, 5'10", BTech/MS(CS), Working in Noida. Contact-8320550957

KUSHWAHA

KUSHWAHA H'some Boy 28/5'7" MCA Engr Google Banglr 25LPA seeks B'ful wkg girl Mob:7294809376, 9973433805 vill.dumari manjhi 841313

NAIDU

NAIDU Boy, 35/180 cms. MD, DNB (Onco), working as Assistant Professor in Govt. Hospital and Consultant in many leading hospitals at Hyderabad. Elite family. Seeks suitable matrimonial proposals from PG or post PG medical doctors. Contact Parents: WhatsApp: 8332853746, 9866053746 e-mail: udvaha23@gmail.com

VAISH

SM for unmarried Gupta boy Oct 79, 5'-8", MCA, working MNC Gurugram 30 LPA. Bureau & Divorcee excuse. WhatsApp 8427276447

BY RELIGION

CHRISTIAN

WANTED Christian God fearing girl preferably PG in medical for 5ft 7" MDS handsome boy 29 yr reputed family in Jabalpur Con : sandeep_2011@rediffmail.com 7692800306

HINDU

SM4 handsome cultured 28/5'8 MBA from reputed institute working in Mumbai with MNC, from affluent professional family, looking for smart educated girl from a good family background Contact: 7738384326

WANTED -BRIDE: For a Well Settled Business Man Based in Mangalore, NEVER MARRIED Hindu Brahmin , Aged: 50/ 5'11", Seeks suitable bride, 34-39 years. Caste No Bar.WhatsApp/call:7975425487

MUDALIAR, 33 Years Old, 174 Cm. Height, Engineer Employee, Hyderabad. Belongs To A Well-Off Family. Seeks A Suitable Bride Between The Ages Of 27 To 30 From A Well-Off Family. Ct: 98845 13749

SEEKING Bride for NRI,Handsome,35,5'9",Reddy, Affluent family. REQ: Girl working in Australia. con: 7396279292, 8639232860

SIKH

MATCH for cleanshaven Bhatia Sikh 32,5'6",only child ,pilot with international airline,50lacs pa. family owns properties of over 25cr.Call 9650777199

BY COMMUNITY

AGARWAL

AGARWAL Punjabi boy, March 98, 5'4"well settled in Bangalore family busuiness seeks educated Hindu girl from respectable family. 9341053100

JAISWAL Boy B.Tech - IIT (K),IAS (Jharkhand)/26/5'10" Gora / Edu. Fmly. Pref - Prof-Edu Girl. Caste no Bar. Send BHP # rpc.ncr5@gmail.com

Nagpur based very well established Agarwal business family seeks alliance for their Son/ 45 yrs/ 5ft 9"/ Div/LLB,MBA/ into family business and also running Law firm. Looking for a compatible match, Caste no bar/status no bar/but without child 9999599564 Or Mail Us At Ypss999@gmail.com

GENERAL

CASTE NO BAR

FAIR , sweet natured, beautiful educated girl for an Excellent Natured handsome MBA punjabi boy, 29yrs, 5ft 9in. Working in Los Angeles, USA. Send Biodata with Photo to Kusumw1944@gmail.com

KOLKATA based 30/5'7"/ B.Tech/30+LPA Sr PM, keeps clean-shaven (bald look). Bisa Agarwal B'ness family. Caste no bar. WA 8777872709.

HINDU 5'7"/57year Divorcee, Company Director, BE + MBA, based at Moscow, Russia, seeks suitable bride, caste / religion NO BAR. Ph: 9004528568 / shagun.russia@mail.ru

BENGALI (36 yrs, 5'10), Sr. Exec in a Tech MNC in Bangalore (30L) seeking a suitable prof. qlfd. girl based in B'lore. Caste no bar. Call 9073909920/8582836439

PQM4 33 years, 6 feet, handsome, strongly built punjabi saraswat Brahmin boy working in MNC in Bengaluru . Salary 47+lac pa. 7489778004

PQM for Pb Khatri NM boy Dec91/5'6" 7.5LPA MBA Working Admin Gurgaon. Caste no bar, #9899242416, lakshayahuja05@gmail.com

ALLIANCE invited for 5'8" MS Electrical Engineering, VLSI from USA. Non-smoking person, 46Y. Genuinely caring, open-minded and trusted individual with a level-headed, grounded approach. Values ethics, creativity, elegance & simplicity. Grew up in Mumbai. Visit nashineys.wordpress.com or search Facebook for Siddharth Nashiney. Creative posts on his blog/Facebook may shed light on the sincere, thoughtful essence inherent in his nature, Whatsapp Father T.R Nashiney +919769733721. Marriage bureaus - please excuse. Caste No Bar.

AFFLUENT Nuclear Jaipur based business kayastha family seeks beautiful cultured bride for May '90,5'7", non veg, non smoker, teetotaler only child, national level sportsman, early marriage, no demands caste no bar WApp 9672142793

SAXENA Boy, 32/5'11", B.Tech / M.Tech, IIT Roorkee, wrkg, at Bengaluru, handsome salary, seeks educated wrkg, Hindu girl. Wapp 9810249099

PQM4 H'some Brahmin Boy ,BTech, MBA ISB, 31Yr, 5'10", Teetotaler Non Smoking,CTC 40 LPA, w'king Gurugram, 7060884999,7060761485.

COSMOPOLITAN

DM doctor (Dec-91/185 cm/ Tamil- Hindi) seeks a virtuous, tall, v.fair, PG Dr/ well edu bride(29-31 yrs) @ Bangalore, Parents: 9342529547/9072118800

RELIGION NO BAR

39/5'9" unmarried Boy Caste no bar Btech-MBA IIM, Wrkg MNC 50 LPA Bn'ess family Accept Divorcee & Widow 9407932961,7587736854

BY LANGUAGE

BENGALI

ASST PROF. IN REPUTED UNIVERSITY 30, 5'-6" SEEKING FOR EDUCATED GOODLOOKING BENGALI GIRL M:9208318881

MALAYALI

MALAYALI Pillai, 39, Bangalore-based entrepreneur, B.E., M.S., divorcee; seeks educated, cultured bride from good family. 8088542510

PUNJABI

SEEKING caring bride for issueless divorced MBA smart clean-shaven handsome Sikh gentleman 55 yrs and 5'10" residing in Mumbai suburb. Pls call/whatsapp 9820054157 or 9820054507.

BRIDE WANTED — Suitable match for Punjabi Khatri High Status, Well Established Computer Engg (NIT), MBA (XLRI), Jamshedpur, very Handsome, very Fair, Clean Shaven, Convent Educated Non Manglik Boy 35/5'10" having own Real Estates and Power Generation business (High metal income) in Jamshedpur. Looking for Punjabi girl of reputed family. No Dowry will be Accepted. CONTACT : 6207121650 88jamshedpur@gmail.com

WANTED Punjabi Bride 30/5'9" Btech-MBA IIM, Working MNC 40 LPA. Caste No Bar Business family. Contact: 9407932961, 9009486689.

Professionally Qlfd Working Match for B.Tech, MBA, Punjabi Khatri only son 32/ 6'1"/ Wrkg. Senior Mgmt. ED Tech Gurgaon, Well Settled, Edu. Gurgaon based broad-minded family. Send details W'App/ Call 9999788949

WANTED GROOMS

BY CASTE

AGARWAL - BISA

CA Agarwal Girl 32/5'-1" Wheatish, Job Gurgaon 21 Lpa, Seeks Well Settled, Highly Educated, Vegetarian Groom. Cont: 9839083290

BRAHMIN

PQM for Br. daughter / never married / Nov - 83 born / BE IT - Working as SENIOR SOLUTION ARCHITECT -Bglr. in USA Based MNC / 60 LPA / Ph :+91- 9327325444 / Email : tkn1944@gmail.com

ODIA Brahmin family invites alliance for 31yrs daughter, fair, 5'3", B.Tech (CSE) from NIT, well placed in Seattle, USA. In search of Odia Brahmin / Karan groom with similar background. WhatsApp with complete biodata to: 9437072475

GARHWALI

30/5'5" , Extr'mly Fair&B'ful, Convent+EU Edu MNC Wkg Girl from H'ly reputed Dehradun Brahmin family.Seek Cultural, Edu, Settled pref. in Delhi NCR.9548728292

JAIN

JAIN 28, 5'7" B'ful S/W Eng. wkg Meta Newyork 1.80 CR (Ft ENT Dr.) seeks US bsd w'stld w'edu gud looking boy Upper cast no bar 9301550045

PUNJABI Khatri 34 yrs 175 cms BE working in L&T chennai, earning 45 LPA looking for punjabi/hindi bride. Whatsapp 9380715230.

SM4, Khatri, 21.5.95 / 11:07 PM/5'2", MSc (HM) Pusa, Sales/Mktg Mngr MNC B'lore, 15 LPA. Seeks edu. wkg bride. GGN based family. 9810975210

BY NATIONALITY

NRI/ GREEN CARD

INDIAN groom 35/5'6", PhD, Scientist, Hong Kong, seeks educated, family-oriented bride. India/NRI. WhatsApp: 8950171930.

US based well settled Electrical engineer PhD brahmin boy 1995/5'10" seeks US educated working girl. contact 8448950105

KAYASTHA

SEEKING a qualified boy for a June'96-born girl, 5'6", MBA-Advertising, working in an MNC in a metro city. Family based in Lucknow #9415101865

MATCH for 23/5'2"fair B.tech(CS spl.AI &ML) wrk as Software engineer in MNC em: outlook1005a@gmail.com 9868103516/9968654396

VAISH

IIT Bombay M.Tech , Gupta/-Kesharwani girl 29/5.3" currently wkg as Sr. Mngr in leading Org. Mumbai. Raipur (CG) bsd b'sn fmly 6261710043

BY COMMUNITY

AGARWAL

SINGHAL Noida based girl b'ful slim brilliant LLM (NLU Jodhpur)wrkg social auditor Mar'98/5'5". Highly qlfd fmly of CAs & Drs. seeks well sttld Agarwal boy.W'ap: 9837126640

ARORA

WELL- Settled teetotaler match for girl. Dec '88, 5'5", Software Engineer, 1 Cr+ p.a., Germany. Caste no bar, born >=1986. No bureaus. Contact: 9463317467

JAT

MBA BTech girl Sep 86/5'3 Job Bank Canada PR, US Green card, Father Doctor Delhi seeks Prof Qual boy-9818617806, aadi.rajyan@gmail.com

NORTH INDIAN

BEAUTIFUL & Fair Brahmin girl working at Tier-1 US MNC, 45-50LPA, 30yrs, 5'6". Affluent family settled in Bangalore. Looking for a handsome boy 5'10" & above working in good company. M:9419181698

BY PROFESSION

DOCTORS

SUITABLE MATCH FOR A GIRL — 29/5'4", MS (ENT) Currently Senior Resident at GMC Kozhikode. Belongs to a respectable Punjabi family from Mumbai. Father is into Construction Business, Brother is Deputy Commissioner (IRS). Looking for a highly qualified professional (Medical/Civil Services/Business) from a Cultured Background. Pref : 5'7"+, Age : 29-33 Yrs. Call: 9820053170

OTHER PROFESSIONALS

1997, 5'6", beautiful, fair, Stanford Master's. Multi-talented / compassionate. Seeks well-qualified groom from Top 15 US schools. (E) uzsh0214@gmail.com

BY RELIGION

HINDU

MBA, MCom(30/5'1")only child,working in MNC,of bengali industrialist.Own house in South Kolkata.Seeks alliance frm prof. qualified elite family 9748704571

MUSLIM

SUNNI Sheikh Siddiqui girl, 5'3"/ 1996 smart, convent-edu, MBBS MD Medicine, affluent family. Seeking MD/MS/DM /MCh doctor, Civil Servant or Businessman. # 9839901213

GENERAL

CASTE NO BAR

SLIM, Fair, B'ful, Never Married, Punjabi girl, 37, 5'3", born & brought up in Delhi. Working as Strategy Director in MNC in Bangalore, (Rs.60 LPA). Seeks smart, well-settled match based in Bangalore. Contact: 7837483747

SM4 well educated Sept'84/ 160cm wkg Sr. Manager Punjabi Khatri never married girl Jaipur bsd edu n cultured fmly pref India based professionally settled boy. drhemantanand@gmail.com

V. B'ful, Gori, Talented,42/5'2"-Kayasth,nvrmarid,DoublePGSc ,UniversityTopper, StatusFmly.NO BARS. Ad for wider choice.9584837117,E: rkishna23@gmail.com

SEEKING aliance from upper caste for Bangalore based, beautiful girl, 95/5'6", MArch, daughter of Army officer, mother, sister doctors.Contact 9885186147

SM4 Kayasth girl October 89/5'4"/fair/B.Tech. from IIT plus MBA (USA) 90 LPA works in Bangalore. Caste no bar. # 9411219372,9456600079 after 8PM

DGM Mumbai, 36/5'6", Sindhi Good Looking girl, Divorced, Seeks suitable Match, Caste no bar. Call: 9969058697 / 9833592418

PQSM4 Sikh Girl, Fair, June' 89, PG Diploma, B.Com. Agility Lead, MNC Hyderabad. 8390380566-Sister. Prefer: Punjabi-Sikh/ Hindu

SM 4 Rajput 35/ 5'3" MBA (Fashion Designer) b'ful Indore based homely girl. Open for all Upper Caste. Indore based preferred. 9300473725

PQM4 Feb 95 born B'ful & Fair 5'3",Sr UX researcher at MNC Bangalore (Pal kshatriya) looking for well stld IT sec boy. 9106511718/9428330517

వరుడు కావలెను — Hyderabad BC Caste 30 Years Height 5.10" B.Tech., Decent Family Profession Business & High Property Very Rich family Requirement Business Person & Height 6" or above Good Education Hyderabad (or) Bangalore Caste No Bar అబ్బాయి కావలెను. ఓం నమో వెంకటేశాయ Tirupati:7093722724

COSMOPOLITAN

IAS/IPS/IIT/PROFESSOR /WELL Qualified Match For Beautiful Fair 31YR 168 CM Gaur Bhhamin Girl Jaipur Based Family PhD English From Oxford UK Mail: anuragupmanyu02@gmail.com WhatsApp: +91 9929355077

BEAUTIFUL, slim Rajput girl, NM 35/5'7". PG (Europe), Des Consultant in Delhi. Looking for well-settled NM groom, tall, 35-42 yrs. js.vivah26@gmail.com

ATTRACTIVE 31, 165, well-educated (IIT+MBA), family-oriented. Affluent, cultured family. Seeks kind, compatible groom. Call or WA 9345 634 365.

PRETTY, Fair, B'lore, Professional, 33 5'7", Master's, Progressive family, Non-veg, Groom tall, cultured, educated, smart, well-placed. 8618070295.

NAIDU girl, 30/5'8", MBA, MNC professional, Rs. 40L, Mumbai. Seeks well-settled, qualified groom, Rs. 40L+. WhatsApp: 9426614998

SECOND MARRIAGE

Wanted educated groom for upper middle class, Bengali,Educated,working,divorcee girl 43 yrs, 5"5 contact 8527800871

DIVORCEE Tamil 41 PQ MNC B'lore seeks qualified Hindu groom in India without issues CNB. ndkp2025@outlook.com

MUMBAI based 34 years. Christian/ Punjabi. Divorcee, issueless. Sr. Cabin Crew with Air India, Only Pilots/ Indian Defence Grooms. Ph: 9833342212

BY LANGUAGE

BENGALI

BENGALI Brahmin Girl 1992/5'5" Slim fair working in airlines (Grd. Crew) at Delhi, Non-Veg. Seeks well-settled, Educated Groom.:- 97698 85822

MBBS, MD Ansth Tata Kay. Bride 22.7.87/ 5'2" Mum, D. dib fel' Cardio & C care MRCP P- I & II prf MD Dr, IT 9821212409, sinhaassociates27@gmail.com

MALAYALI

LONDON PG girl, MNC BLR, Ezhava, 26 yrs, 155 cm. Native Thrissur, seeks Malayali Ezhava Hindu groom, PG, MNC, well settled. 9880220199.

PUNJABI

PQM 4 Bangalore bsd fair B'ful Punjabi girl 32/5'6" Sr. Sft. Eng. Pkg 34 L, Family Lucknow bsd seeks Prof. Qlfd. Well Settled groom: 9415469956, 9307609110

GROOM WANTED — A WELL EDUCATED PUNJABI/HINDU GROOM FOR A POSTGRADUATE VERY FAIR CHARMING PUNJABI KSHATRIYA DAUGHTER 33 yrs. 157 cm FROM A HIGHLY EDUCATED LEADING BUSINESS FAMILY AT BHOPAL. Email: bs6925ed@gmail.com

BY NATIONALITY

NRI/ GREEN CARD

USA SFO/Bay Area groom for convent educated Agarwal girl. Never married. Oct. '88, 5'4". M.Des. (Ivy League). Working with state govt. Mo/WhAp 9850588978.

IYER Brahmin Parents seek for their daughter. Dentist (BDS Mumbai, MPh Houston, DDS UCLA) in San Francisco, (H1B visa ,I-140 Green Card in process) , 35/5'2", Vegetarian, a suitably Qlfd, Smart & Very Well Settled Match from the USA. Iyers prefd. Send details to : malaika_n@hotmail.com .WA/M: 9833494080

HINDU Punjabi British citizen 35,5'8" fair and good looking working in UK MNC seeks professional UK settled boy. Whatsapp - 9312265430

MATCH for Seattle Microsoft SW Engr. Dec'91,5'5",beautiful North Indian girl. Caste, lower age no bar. Parents in Bangalore WA 9845624616

YouTuber arrested for teen's kidnap-murder after 26 years

Salim Was On Run After Jumping Bail

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi Police's crime branch has arrested a prominent YouTuber for brutally murdering a 13-year-old after kidnapping him for ransom 31 years ago. On the run after jumping bail in 2000, Salim Khan became Salim Wastik and courted fame and danger with his views on Islam and national security on YouTube. Police said Salim was even signed for a Bollywood biopic recently.

It was fame that landed 'Ex-Muslim Salim Wastik' in the police net: a head constable supplied the valuable tip and a team tracking parole-jumbers put the pieces together with some old photos of Salim's.

The YouTuber had a brush with police this Feb when he was stabbed by two brothers at his office in Loni, Ghaziabad. Salim suffered multiple wounds to the neck and abdomen. Police identified the attackers as "fanatics" outraged by his religious commentary. In the following weeks, both attackers were gunned down in encounters, while UP police provided Salim with personal security officers.

By the time Salim recovered from his injuries, the crime branch had connected the dots and moved in to arrest him, ending a chase that began 26 years ago.

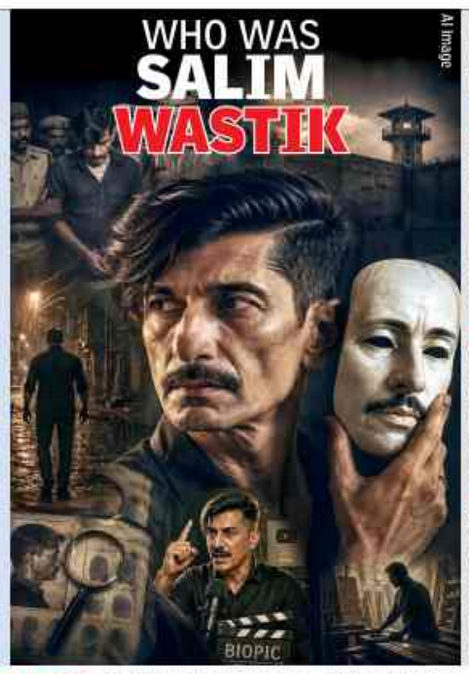
It was on Jan 20, 1995 that Sandeep Bansal, the son of a cement businessman in the city, disappeared on his way to second-shift classes at Ramjas School in Daryaganj.

The following day, his father, Sita Ram, received ransom demands totaling 30,000, with instructions to leave the cash on a bus headed towards Baghpat. The family complied, but the boy never returned.

Police suspicion fell on Salim Khan, a martial arts instructor at Sandeep's school. After a neighbour reported seeing the child leave in a rickshaw with a tall male known as 'Masterji', police confronted Salim. Under interrogation, Salim confessed and led investigators to a drain in Mustafabad, where Sandeep's body was recovered. His accomplice, a man named Anil, later surrendered and was found to have planned the kidnapping for money. In 1997, both men were sentenced to life imprisonment.

The trajectory of the case shifted in 2000 when the Delhi high court granted Salim interim bail. He vanished. To deceive law enforcement, he reportedly declared himself dead and assumed the new identity of 'Salim Ahmed', eventually adopting the moniker 'Salim Wastik'.

For the next two decades, he evaded capture by moving across Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, working as an almirah maker and later opening a ladies' clothing shop in Ghaziabad. Once he became a YouTuber with a considerable following, he came on the police radar. "A team led by inspector Robin Tyagi and supervised by ACP Sanjay Kumar Nagpal was tasked with tracking long-term parole jumpers. Acting on secret information provided by head constable Mintu Yadav, the team utilised fingerprints and old photographs to confirm that the famous 'Ex-Muslim Salim Wastik' was, in fact, the fugitive Salim Khan," said DCP (crime) Sanjeev Yadav.



AI Image

- Delhi Crime Branch arrested 54-year-old **Salim Wastik (real name: Salim Khan)** in an old kidnapping and murder case
- He has been lodged in Tihar Jail to serve his remaining sentence

PROFILE & CONTROVERSY

- Wastik had gained national fame as a controversial YouTuber and social activist critical of Islam
- He recently signed a deal with a Bollywood producer for a biopic on his life

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT & ENCOUNTER

- On Feb 27, 2026, Wastik was stabbed multiple times in the neck and abdomen at his office in Loni
- The motive was linked to his public criticisms of religious texts and Islam
- He was provided with Personal Security Officers (PSOs). Uttar Pradesh Police placed a Rs 1 lakh bounty on the suspects
- In March, the two alleged attackers, Zeeshan and Gulfam, were both killed in separate encounters with UP Special Task Force and Ghaziabad Police

THE 1995 CASE: CRIME, DECEPTION, AND IDENTIFICATION

- In 1995, Salim and an associate kidnapped and murdered 13-year-old Sandeep Bansal for a Rs 30,000 ransom
- Salim was a martial arts instructor at the boy's school at the time
- He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1997 but jumped interim bail in 2000
- To evade the law, he declared himself dead and assumed the new identity of 'Salim Wastik', living as an almirah maker and shopkeeper for decades
- Despite his new identity, Crime Branch tracked him down by matching old photographs and fingerprints from the 1995 case records

When pushing kids to excel in studies, how much is too much?

To help readers cope with their anxieties in these stressful times, TOI's ***Talk it Out*** *series brings expert counsellors to answer your mental health queries. This week's advice is from clinical psychologist & couples therapist* ***Mithila Desai***

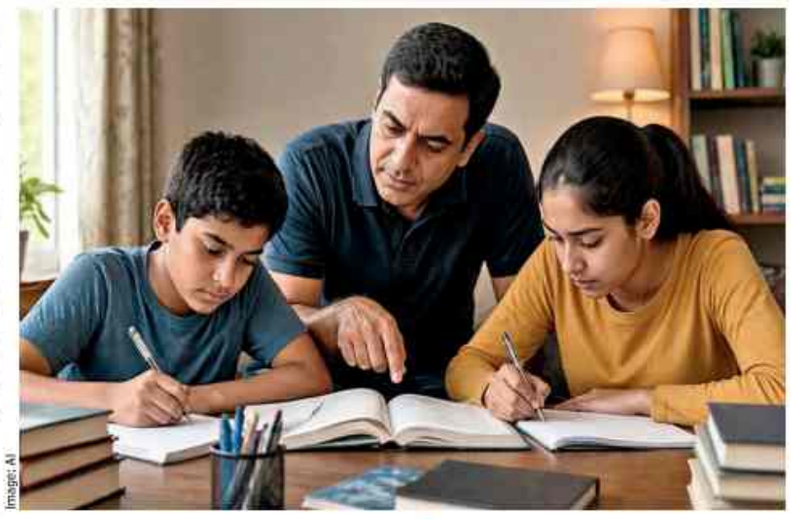


Image: AI

■ We live in Delhi with two sincere and hardworking kids, one studying in class 8 and the other in class 12 (PCM stream). The elder one is preparing for competitive exams. My husband helps a lot with the syllabus, covering subjects like general knowledge and English. But he is a hard taskmaster, making it difficult for my kids to meet his expectations. The younger one is bearing most of the brunt, being forced to put in more effort. My kids express their pain with me, but my husband doesn't give priority to our thoughts. He feels whatever he is doing is absolutely right. I know he is doing his best to help, but pushing them beyond their capabilities is making the kids stressed. How do I make my husband realise he also needs to give them some space?

— Anonymous

Your husband's intentions come from love, but are results improving or just stress levels rising? Caring and helping is not always the same thing. Chronic stress hurts memory, focus, and motivation, which are exactly what competitive exams demand. A class 8 child and a class 12 child are also at very different stages. What stretches one can quietly break the other. Try framing conversations as a shared concern with questions such as: "We both want them to do well. How do we make sure they don't burn out?" That small shift can change the whole tone. A short weekly check-in where everyone shares one good thing, one hard thing, and one need, with no fixing, just listening, can also help your husband understand what the kids are actually carrying. If talks keep stalling, a family therapist can help. You don't have to do this alone.

■ I am a 19-year-old from Delhi, and I'm very confused about my relationship goals. I have been best friends with a girl for the past four years. I've started liking her romantically. She behaves as if she likes me, but sometimes I feel she is playing with my feelings. One moment, she feels a strong connection, and the very next moment, I feel it's just time pass for her. I had a past relationship which didn't work out because I think I love my best friend more. I want to marry her but she is taking too much time to commit. Should I break up with her or confess how I am feeling? Please advise.

— Praney Jain

At 19, feelings like these are genuinely confusing, especially when a close friendship starts shifting into something more. The back and forth you're describing is exhausting. One moment there's a real connection, the next you're second-guessing everything. That kind of uncertainty takes a toll. You don't need to break up or propose right now. What you do need is an honest conversation. Not about marriage, just about where you both stand. Something simple like, "I value our friendship, and I've developed feelings for you. I get mixed signals sometimes, and I'd love to talk about it honestly," is enough to start. If, after that conversation, things are still unclear or you keep feeling like an afterthought, it's okay to step back. You deserve consistency, not confusion.

■ I'm a 25-year-old girl from a middle-class family in Jharkhand. I have done an MBA but not from a popular college, which is why I can't get private sector jobs. So, I decided to prepare for public sector jobs. But my parents are thinking of getting me married off. I am very afraid of marriage as I've heard of many adverse cases. Living in a small city reduces my opportunities. I have always been a good student but now, I feel I don't know that much. Not landing a job, with constant pressure of marriage, is getting me more depressed by the day. What should I do?

— Priyanka Rana

The self-doubt creeping in makes complete sense. But it doesn't mean you've lost your ability, it means you're exhausted. Try to separate the two pressures for now. A job search and a marriage decision are different things, and one shouldn't be forced simply because the other feels stuck. When it comes to your parents, a direct but calm conversation can help. Something like, "Give me one year to focus on my exams. If things don't work out, I'll revisit the marriage conversation then." Timelines often ease everyone's anxiety, including your own. If the low mood is starting to affect your sleep, appetite, or ability to study consistently, please don't push through alone. Speaking to a counsellor isn't a sign of weakness; it's how you make sure you're actually okay enough to show up for yourself. Asking for time isn't rebellion. It's self-respect.

TalkitOut

WANT SOME ADVICE?

Sharing can help your recovery so write to us at **talkitout@timesofindia.com** with your question, name and place. But if you wish to stay anonymous, do indicate that in your email.

You can also visit bit.ly/TOITalkItOut or scan this QR code to send in your concern.

More snakebites across Kerala; 11-year-old boy escapes attack

Kottayam/Kozhikode: A 15-year-old student in Kayamkulam and a middle-aged man in Thottappally, both in Alappuzha, suffered snakebite. Anamika, daughter of Santhosh, was bitten on Friday night while Salik, 51, sustained the bite early Saturday morning.

Anamika was rushed to the Kayamkulam hospital, given five doses of antivenom and shifted to a private hospital at Nooranad. Hospital authorities reported that she is out of danger.

Salik was bitten around 12.30am. He was admitted to the Vandanam medical college hospital and is currently in ICU. Recently, a young woman and a housewife died from snakebites in the district. TNN

FM: Will source crude from wherever it's available, wherever it's cheaper

▶Continued from page 1

The minister said the govt would prioritise ensuring availability of critical inputs such as energy and fertilisers, even at the cost of fiscal pressures, drawing upon its pandemic playbook. "When fertilizer prices abroad shot up, we still bought them at those prices and ensured that supply disruptions did not happen. Above all, the price was not passed on to farmers," she said, indicating a similar approach if the current crisis intensifies.

On energy security, Sitharaman reiterated that India would continue to source crude pragmatically to protect domestic needs. "What suits India's interest will be our top priority. We will source from wherever it is available, wherever it is cheaper, and wherever it can be supplied on time to meet our requirements," she said.

The minister stressed that the policy approach would not involve trade-offs between growth, inflation and stability. "We have to work on all three simultaneously, remaining constantly vigilant and alert to changes," Sitharaman said. At the same time, FM made it clear that govt support must be matched by stronger action from industry, particularly in boosting domestic manufacturing and reducing import dependence. "India's domestic market still needs many goods to be manufactured within the country. Every import presents an opportunity for domestic manufacturing," the Union minister said.

Framing import substitution as a business opportunity, Sitharaman added: "Why should we import when industry in India can produce these goods? Wouldn't you want to produce for Indian consumers? That is a huge market."

She also called for greater agility and investment from corporates. "If there is anything that is preventing industry from expanding, building capacity or investing in new technologies, we are open to hearing and responding so that industry does not feel constrained," she said.

Deloitte. presents THE ECONOMIC TIMES AWARDS FOR CORPORATE EXCELLENCE

Uma Kadam

Naidu and Sitharaman at the ET Awards for Corporate Excellence

High turnout points to change in Bengal and TN: Sitharaman

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: FM Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday said high voter turnout in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu points to possible anti-incumbency and political change, while describing defections to BJP to the party's governance and leadership appeal.

Sitharaman linked elevated voter participation to dissatisfaction with incumbent govts, saying that "the normal psephologist analysis would say when there is strong anti-incumbency... that's when there is a voter turnout of this kind," adding that "there will be a change going by this voter turnout..."

On leaders from other parties joining BJP, she said parties attract entrants when they "run a responsive govt" and are "absolutely fair in dealing with every section of society."

Naidu: Must unite to tackle structural gaps

Mumbai: Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu backed women's reservation, growth-led welfare and a higher birth rate, arguing that India must tackle structural challenges together.

Addressing the The Economic Times Awards for Corporate Excellence, he said reserving seats for women was the best route to stronger political participation and dismissed fears that delimitation would disadvantage southern states, saying any increase in seats would apply proportionately across India.

On the economy, Naidu said welfare could not rest on borrowing and giveaways alone. Govts, he said, must first generate wealth through reforms, investment and business growth.

Naidu also called for a rethink on population policy. The Andhra CM said India should now encourage families to have at least two children to preserve its demographic advantage. TNN

'Lack of proof': 12 yrs on, man acquitted of minor's rape

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Mumbai: After spending almost 12 years in jail on charges of repeatedly gangraping an 11-year-old girl, a special Pocso court acquitted a 35-year-old man, observing that the prosecution failed to provide "clinching evidence" to prove the victim's age or the allegations of sexual assault. Another accused died during the pendency of the trial, and the third was a minor and tried separately.

While a birth certificate showed the girl's age as 11 during the 2014 incident, hospital records from the same period recorded her birth year as 1993, suggesting she was 21 years old. The judge noted that the prosecution did not examine the authority that issued the birth certificate to resolve the conflict. "...in the absence of examination of the issuing authority, to my mind, it cannot be firmly said that the date of birth of the victim girl is March 4, 2003 as medical report indicates her date of birth as May 4, 1993," the judge said.

Further, medical evidence also failed to support the prosecution's claims of repeated penetrative assault. A doctor who examined the girl deposed about a ruptured hymen and said that such a condition could result from non-sexual activities and that it was impossible to determine when or how the rupture occurred.

Special Judge N D Khose remarked that "only rupture of hymen cannot be the sole criterion to opine about the sexual intercourse," especially since no other physical injuries or forensic links were found.

The judge also took a dim view of the two-day delay in filing the police report, which remained unexplained throughout the trial. "If there is an inordinate, unexplained delay in registration of FIR, there is every scope to draw inference that the same FIR might have been registered after thought," the judge said.

WHO clears first malaria treatment for newborns

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New Delhi: In a first, World Health Organisation has cleared a malaria treatment made specifically for newborns and young infants—closing a gap doctors have struggled with for years.

The drug is a child-friendly version of artemether-lumefantrine—a two-drug therapy in which one component acts quickly to reduce parasites in the blood, while the other stays longer to clear the rest and prevent the illness from returning. It is designed for babies weighing between 2 and 5 kg. Until now, infants with malaria were treated with medicines for older children, often requiring dose adjustments at the risk of mistakes or side effects.

WHO prequalification clears the way for countries and global agencies to procure the medicine for public health programmes, expanding access to a quality-assured treatment for one of the most vulnerable groups. While the immediate impact is expected in high-burden regions such as Africa, the approval also opens the door for countries like India to adopt the formulation through national programmes if needed.

"The announcements come as the world marks World Malaria Day today," the WHO said, underscoring both urgency and opportunity in the fight against the disease.

"For centuries, malaria has stolen children from parents," said WHO DG Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, adding that new tools are helping turn the tide—but only if countries continue to invest in the fight.

Parallelly, WHO has also cleared three new rapid tests to improve malaria diagnosis. Current tests detect a protein called HRP2, but in many regions the parasite has evolved to evade detection—leading to missed cases, with studies from 46 countries showing gaps, including up to 80% under-detection in parts of the Horn of Africa.

The drug is a child-friendly formulation of artemether-lumefantrine, designed for babies weighing between 2 and 5 kg. Until now, infants with malaria were treated with medicines intended for older children, often requiring dose adjustments, with the risk of errors or side effects

Daughters of driver, gardener defy odds in Class 12 success

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Dehradun: Geetika Pant from Bageshwar and Naincy Dubey from Dehradun emerged as inspiring toppers in the Uttarakhand board results, their achievements shaped by hardship and resilience. Geetika scored 98% in Class 12, jointly topping the state, while balancing her studies with caring for her ailing grandfather until his death. She later dedicated her success to him, crediting her taxi-driver father and family support for helping her persist through financial strain. She now aims to become an engineer.

Naincy Dubey topped her Dehradun school in Class 10 with 83% after her family left Uttar Pradesh due to farming losses and land deprivation. Her father works as a gardener, and the family cannot afford private tuition, so she relied on self-study and free resources. She hopes to pursue science and join the merchant navy.

Dehradun's Naincy, daughter of a gardener, topped her school

Across Uttarakhand, girls outperformed boys, pass percentages improved, and several students from modest backgrounds achieved top ranks through discipline and determination.

A taxi driver's daughter in Bageshwar rose to the top of Uttarakhand's Intermediate results after studying through her grandfather's long illness and death, while a gardener's daughter in Dehradun topped her school in Class 10 after her family left Uttar Pradesh when farming losses and the loss of their land made a fresh start unavoidable.

Two killed in blast at TN firecracker unit

Theni: Two workers were killed in an explosion at a firecracker unit when a room containing chemicals was opened in Cumbum in Theni district on Saturday morning. Police have arrested the unit's manager in this connection.

Police said the incident happened at Lakshmi Fireworks at Kattupallivasal Street in Cumbum. Around 9.30am, the workers opened the unit's chemical mixing room after a week's holiday when the blast happened resulting in the immediate death of two workers. The deceased were identified as Dinesh alias Deenadayalan, 23, and Surya Prabu, 21, from Cumbum.

Police said the room was not opened with the required caution as it should have been opened slowly. Fire and rescue personnel from Uthamapalayam and Cumbum along with police rushed to the spot and doused the fire in 30 minutes. Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Theni Govt Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

While the unit was operating with only five workers, on the day of the incident four of them reported for duty. Two of them were standing near the main entrance and escaped unhurt. A case was registered by Cumbum North police, and further investigation is underway. TNN

Telangana governor clears Azhar as MLC

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Hyderabad: Telangana governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Saturday cleared the long-pending nominations of former India cricket captain Mohammad Azharuddin and Telangana Jana Samithi founder M Kodandaram as MLCs under the governor's quota, ending months of uncertainty.

The approval came just in time for Azharuddin, who was required to become a legislator within six months of being appointed a minister, a deadline that expires on April 30. The Revanth Reddy cabinet had forwarded the names of Azharuddin and Kodandaram in August 2025, but the file did not move under then governor Jishnu Dev Varma.

Sources said Shukla acted after legal advice confirmed that Supreme Court had not barred the appointments, only stipulating that they would remain subject to its final verdict in petitions filed by BRS' Dasoju Sravan and Kurra Satyanarayana, and later by Amer Ali Khan, who had been nominated under the governor's quota in Aug 2024. The oath-taking is expected before the end of the month.

Sindoor marked big shift, but US ties cast shadow

BY INVITATION

HARSH V PANT

A year after Operation Sindoor, the contours of India's response in May 2025 appear less as a moment of rupture and more as a confident consolidation of an evolving strategic outlook. Triggered by the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians, New Delhi's actions were not simply reactive; they were measured, deliberate, and designed to signal that India now possesses both the capability and the political will to defend its interests. In retrospect, Sindoor stands out as a moment where intent and capacity aligned with unusual clarity.

At the operational level, the most striking feature was the maturity of India's military coordination. For a system often criticised for inter-service silos, the seamless integration of the army, navy, and air force under the Chief of Defence Staff suggested that India is capable of orchestrating complex, multi-domain operations under pressure. This was complemented by the effective use of indigenous systems, indicating that the push for self-reliance in defence is beginning to translate into tangible battlefield advantages. This has strengthened confidence in India's capacity to sustain such capabilities over time.

Equally significant was the expansion of battlespace. By striking beyond the Line of Control into Pakistan's strategic depth, India demonstrated that the constraints imposed by nuclear deterrence are not as rigid as once assumed. Rather than being paralysed by escalation risks, New Delhi showed that carefully calibrated conventional operations can impose costs while maintaining control. The maritime dimension reinforced this shift, with naval deployments extending the operational canvas.

The diplomatic aftermath of Sindoor has further underlined this growing confidence. India's approach toward Pakistan has become more coherent, moving toward a framework where engagement is clearly conditioned by behaviour. By linking previously insulated domains, such as water and connectivity, to the broader security context, New Delhi has signalled that the costs of supporting proxy violence will be multidimensional and not merely punitive.

The international response to Sindoor continues to offer important clues about India's external environment. The US, in particular, appeared to accept India's framing of the operation as counter-terrorism rather than interstate escalation. But a year on, it is clear that this 'acceptance' was conditional rather than transformative. Indeed, the episode has exposed the persistent transactionalism in India-US ties. For Washington, India is an important strategic partner

NEW PLAYBOOK: The battle is over the but the battle of narratives has been almost as significant

in the Indo-Pacific, but that partnership has limits when it comes to crises involving Pakistan. This became evident in the controversy surrounding Donald Trump's claims that he had facilitated the ceasefire. Whether accurate or not, such assertions complicate India's carefully crafted narrative of strategic autonomy. New Delhi has long resisted any suggestion of third-party mediation, particularly on issues linked to Kashmir. Even the perception of external involvement risks diluting the message Sindoor was meant to send. Since then, this claim has cast a lingering shadow, with India-US ties continuing to be shaped, however subtly, by the overhang of that episode.

For Pakistan, these claims provided a degree of diplomatic relief. The suggestion of US involvement, however tenuous, reinforces its long-standing effort to internationalise disputes with India. In that sense, the battle over narratives has proven almost as consequential as the operation itself. Sindoor was designed to establish a new logic of deterrence, but its interpretation remains contested. Did India succeed in imposing costs unilaterally, or was de-escalation ultimately brokered under external pressure? The ambiguity serves Pakistan's interests and complicates India's attempt to redefine the terms of engagement. Yet, while Rawalpindi has sought to leverage international narratives, the operational outcomes of Sindoor have reinforced the costs of its long-standing reliance on proxy actors. The shift toward a more hardened bilateral equation reflects not just India's resolve, but also a recalibration of expectations in Islamabad about the space for deniable aggression.

China's reading of Sindoor further highlights India's growing strategic confidence. The performance of Chinese-origin systems in Pakistan's inventory has inevitably drawn attention, but more importantly, India's willingness to act across domains signals a readiness to operate under complex conditions. For Beijing, this adds a new dimension to its assessment of India, not merely as a continental challenger, but as a more versatile and capable strategic actor.

A year on, what emerges is not a rigid doctrine but a clearer pattern of behaviour. India has demonstrated a willingness to employ force in a calibrated and purposeful manner, enhancing deterrence while preserving flexibility. Operation Sindoor, therefore, stands as a marker of India's strategic coming of age. The challenge ahead will be to sustain this balance, ensuring that assertiveness is guided by prudence. ■

Pant is vice-president for Studies and Foreign Policy, Observer Research Foundation

Comeback pavilion in Venice will break stereotypes about India and Indian art

The Venice Biennale is not just an art event, it's a soft power flex for nations. After a seven-year absence, India returns to this global stage—often dubbed the Art Olympics—with a national pavilion. In an interview with ***Neelam Raaj****, curator and art historian* ***Amin Jaffer*** *explains his curatorial vision and why this is a big moment for Indian art*

FOR THE RECORD

What, in your view, makes India's return to the Venice Biennale particularly significant?

I think India's absence at Venice was very deeply felt because we have a rich visual culture. And I think the fact that we were not represented in Venice meant that, for the global audience at large, something was missing. This is a very proud moment for all of us involved in the project and for Indians interested in culture worldwide.

There is a persistent notion that Indian art is figurative and decorative. In showcasing five less familiar contemporary artists, were you also pushing back against that cliché?

Absolutely. Nothing in the pavilion is done by chance. It's all very considered and consciously conceived. I wanted to showcase artists who, though they have already been recognised in museums and among collectors, may not yet be household names. The idea was to present artists of true international calibre who hadn't been shown in Venice before. I also wanted to break stereotypes about India and Indian art. Very often, exhibitions are self-referential—in imagery, verbiage, colouring, and figuration. This project is deeply rooted in Indian civilisation because all of these artists work with materials and techniques that have existed in India for hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years. But their artworks are not predictable. They feel fresh, contemporary in conception, and impressive in their execution. These works are remarkably complex, entirely handmade, and produced over weeks of labour.

Is the focus on labour a deliberate counterpoint to an increasingly digital, AI-driven visual culture?

In this very synthetic world of ours, where we're increasingly relying on artificial and digital works of art that are developed through our own ingenuity, but not through our own hands, I wanted to propose something that's really quite the opposite. India has been a civilisation with its own very rich aesthetics and a celebrated tradition of craftsmanship. So, I wanted to bring that to the fore. When you see Ranjani Shettar's flowers, Alwar Balasubramaniam's (Bala) fractured land, Asim Waqif's scaffolding, Skarma Sonam Tashi's organic materials or Sumakshi Singh's house, they all speak of Indian technique. The materiality is Indian, yet the works are adventurous, contemporary, and provocative.

Antonio Martinelli

You centre the pavilion around the idea of home. Can you tell us more about that?

As I've traversed through life and lived and worked on different continents, I increasingly ask myself, where is my home? This is tied up with my Indian identity, because I'm 100% ethnically Indian but born in Central Africa. Although my parents were very westernised, India was very deeply ingrained in my cultural identity through its food, music, textiles, and jewellery. As I moved abroad for education and for life, I began to reflect on how families like ours maintain Indianness despite geographic distance. How is it that Indians, even after several generations abroad, still feel so deeply Indian? It's quite remarkable.

The project really began when I saw Sumakshi Singh recreating her demolished family home in Delhi through embroidery, which raises questions about how urban environments are transforming in India. From Sumakshi's work, I expanded the idea of home. While Bala's fractured soil sculptures reflect our relationship with land, Ladakhi artist Tashi's work reflects how traditional homes in Ladakh are being replaced by modern structures, which distance you from nature. Together, all these works form a narrative.

There's also a significant Indian presence beyond the pavilion this year. How do you see that shaping the overall moment for Indian art in Venice?

It's truly a remarkable moment. Nalini Malani will be part of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art's major exhibition. Kiran Nadar has consistently presented important projects in Venice, including a video work on M F Husain in 2024. This year's Nalini Malani show is highly anticipated. Dayanita Singh is opening an exhibition at the State Archives, which is very exciting, and Amar Kanwar is already showing at the Palazzo Grassi to a strong response. Himali Soin, meanwhile, is part of the Biennale's international exhibition. Later in the year, Homo Faber, an important showcase of global craftsmanship, will feature around 30 Indian artisans. And alongside all of this, Serendipity Arts Foundation is organising a series of performances across Venice—music on boats, poetry, readings, and collaborations with local institutions. The idea is to extend India's presence beyond the pavilion. While the pavilion itself is a powerful, static space, these parallel events allow people across the city to encounter Indian culture in different forms. Taken together, it makes for a much more expansive and immersive Indian presence in Venice.

A Ravi Varma painting recently sold for a record Rs 167 crore, yet the debate about whether Indian art remains undervalued globally refuses to go away. What do you think?

The value of art is closely linked to the strength of the economy that produces it. Artists from the US, Europe—countries with strong art infrastructure—command the highest prices. Indian art is rising, but this is only the beginning. As India's economy grows, so will the value of its art. What's important is institutional recognition—museums, exhibitions, and global platforms like Venice. These help establish Indian art as significant not just nationally, but internationally. The more we invest in cultural infrastructure and global engagement, the more the market will reflect that strength.

Marx to market, Bengal voters are no longer buying inequality narrative

SWAMINOMICS

SWAMINATHAN S ANKLESARIA AIYAR

During election campaigns, it becomes clear which issues matter most to voters and which do not. Marxist intellectuals writing in learned journals have long railed against entrenched inequality in India. CPM veterans like Biman Bose say that Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata and Narendra Modi in New Delhi throw a few crumbs to the masses through freebies at election time, but have no interest in fundamental change in inequality. This narrative of capitalist exploitation finds few takers in the current election campaign in West Bengal.

The recent Wealth Tracker India 2026 report claimed that the richest 1% of Indians control over 40% of national wealth. The richest 10% get nearly 60% of the national income, while the bottom half survives on a 15% share. The report says that the number of dollar billionaires in India rose from one in 1991 to 358 by 2025. Today, 1,688 individuals in India are worth over Rs 1,000 crore each, and their cumulative wealth totals almost 50% of India's GDP.

You might think that such news will horrify voters who, for 30 years, voted for Communist rule. The very opposite is the case. The narrative of exploitative inequality is stale. Youngsters in Presidency College may still post graffiti or red revolution, but nobody need take that seriously. Students there smile when told of Bernard Shaw's famous adage: "If you are not a Communist at the age of 20, you have no heart. If you are still a Communist at the age of 30, you have no head."

A separate paper of the World Inequality Lab shows India to be virtually the most unequal country in the world, more unequal than even during the British Raj. However, this has been contested in a new paper by Vidhu Shekhar and Surabhi Mukhopadhyay of the SP Jain Institute of Management and Research. Instead of looking just at pre-tax income, these two economists have looked not just at earned incomes but at the monetised value of welfare transfers to different categories of voters, which are very substantial in India. They find that inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient falls sharply to around 0.27, making India among the more egalitarian countries of the world.

A similar narrative comes from the World Bank, which in 2025 produced a report showing India to be the fourth most egalitarian country in the world with a Gini coefficient of 0.25. Left intellectuals will contest the statistical basis of these calculations, and it seems the debate will go on forever.

Voters care not a fig for statistical debates. What they do know is that soaring stock markets have made the wealthy wealthier. However, they are not unhappy that Mukesh Ambani has become richer, nor are they happy that Anil Ambani has gone bust. They don't care either way because, unlike Left ideologues, they do not think that they are poor because the rich are getting richer.

Far from resenting the billions of billionaires, the middle class wants a slice of the soaring stock market. Every month, the rising millions in the Indian middle class invest thousands of crores in the stock market, mostly through Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs).

Indians seek opportunity rather than equality. They travel to distant corners of India (and of the world) in search of economic opportunity. The bigger the inequality between Kolkata and Mumbai, the greater the opportunity provided by migration, temporary or permanent. Hence, the riches of Mumbai evoke excitement in Bengal, not jealousy. Bengalis, like other Indians, seek employment in companies run by the richest — these provide the most opportunity.

BJP seeks to make illegal migration the biggest election issue. But Bangladeshi Muslims would be silly to migrate to economically stagnant Muslim-majority areas of West Bengal like Murshidabad or Malda. Those who brave the privations of illegal migration will go where the most opportunity lies, in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, or Bengaluru.

Voters love freebies, especially cash benefits paid directly into their bank accounts, and paid before the elections rather than left as promises to be implemented at some later date. Mamata Banerjee is implementing freebies galore, following in the footsteps of the chief ministers of Bihar and Maharashtra who were re-elected with handsome margins on the back of freebies. Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran worries that the rising tide of freebies will create a shortage of funds for social sectors and infrastructure. But till now, India's rapid economic growth has provided enough money for both freebies and public investment. ■

More eyes, more risk. Iran war shows dark side of CCTV boom

HARD TAKE

ROBIN DAVID

It is difficult to miss the sense of awe with which most news reports describe how Israel's intelligence agencies hacked into Tehran's street cameras and used the data to assassinate Iran's top leadership. It felt like one was reading a tech espionage thriller or a Mission Impossible script.

However, the real feeling — especially in India — should be unease or even alarm for three reasons. First, Indian cities are among the most densely surveilled in the world, along with China. Second, many of our extensive CCTV networks were put in place about a decade or so ago and have negligible security features. They will most likely fail to keep hackers and foreign intelligence agencies at bay.

Third, as has been reported extensively, hacking CCTV networks has become the norm globally. Hamas hacked Israel's networks before the deadly Oct 7, 2023, attacks, and Russia did the same in Ukraine during its invasion on Feb 24, 2022. AI has only magnified the risk. What once required weeks or months of painstaking analysis of CCTV footage can now be done in real time — enabling the rapid identification and tracking of targets. If Israeli intelligence sleuths knew Tehran like the back of their hands, as some reports stated, then one can assume that Chinese, Pakistani or even American intelligence sleuths know most Indian cities equally well. Or at least, it wouldn't take them much effort to map our cities, track our VIPs and create chaos if they wished to.

Security agencies in New Delhi have started removing CCTV cameras with Chinese components in recent days. This is a smart move, especially when one considers that the cameras of Hikvision — the Chinese company whose equipment was used in Delhi — were also deployed in Tehran just before the war started.

But the larger issue is not just that Chinese tech companies are compromised, and their equipment can be weaponised. It is that, if not sufficiently secured, any CCTV camera can be hacked and turned into a weapon of war. But despite knowing these vulnerabilities for years, govt agencies across India have done precious little to secure their networks. Even after Iran, senior police officials admit there has been only a perfunctory discussion on the issue.

Surprisingly, some govt agencies even livestream their CCTV feed on the internet without any checks. One such agency is the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), which is key to India's food security. Sitting in an office in Hyderabad, this writer could access almost all their CCTV feeds simply by googling "public CCTV camera feeds India". You can watch multiple CWC cameras across 17 cities and their sub-centres.

To a casual observer, watching stacked sacks of foodgrain with labourers milling around in the distance or an officer looking bored in front of his computer may seem unremarkable. But can the same be said for someone who seeks to damage India's foodgrain stocks, especially in these times of fragile supply chains and geopolitical disruptions?

To understand how seriously compromised Indian cities are in this regard, one needs to only surf numerous surveys available online that rank surveillance density by counting the number of CCTV cameras per 1,000 of population. A June 2025 survey by Comparitech, a website that provides information, tools and reviews on cybersecurity and privacy online, placed Hyderabad at No 2 with 900,000 cameras (79 cameras per 1,000 people), Indore at No 3 with 251,500 cameras (72 cameras per 1,000 people) and Bengaluru at No 4 with 585,284 cameras (40 cameras per 1,000 people). Another survey from March 2024 ranked Delhi at 10 and Hyderabad at 8. But ranks and numbers aside, it is a known fact that police forces across the country use CCTV networks extensively to crack crimes and are aggressively pushing to install more. Some, like Telangana police, even use facial recognition technology on their CCTV networks, which could make the job of a hacker even easier when it comes to identifying specific individuals and tracking them.

I SPY: Removing CCTVs with Chinese components is smart, but even other cameras can be hacked

What, then, is the way forward? The first step is a comprehensive, nationwide audit of CCTV infrastructure — one that is transparent and made public, however uncomfortable the findings may be, as public safety is at stake. As experts like Shruti Mantri, associate director at the ISB Institute of Data Science, and Zaki Qureshey, director general of the National Security Cluster, have noted, only a transparent audit can tell us if our networks need to be replaced or retrofitted. There must also be clearly defined norms on how and from where to acquire such equipment and how to protect the data it generates. It is important to remember that 21st-century wars are not fought only with ballistic missiles and drones. They are also fought with the CCTV cameras mounted on your street corner. ■

WORD DROP

SUNSET CLAUSE

In legal parlance, the term "sunset clause" has existed for a long time, referring to instances where agreements expire after a fixed period unless renewed. However, a number of youngsters are now borrowing this idea and applying it to the ever-evolving world of modern dating. Moving away from the notions of forevers and happily ever afters, this refers to

Image: AI

situations where two people consciously decide that their relationship has an end date (or at least a review point) built into it. Instead of assuming permanence, they acknowledge uncertainty and create space for change. This idea can feel pragmatic and liberating, allowing partners to be present without forcing long-term promises they may not be ready to keep, especially in phases of transition, such as moving cities or career shifts.

INBOX

BETTER INCENTIVES

Apropos of the column 'India's manufacturing...' (ATM, Apr 19), it is pertinent that a basic minimum wage be set along with proper incentives at the central and state levels. There should also be a mandate for better working environment in factories for optimised man-machine interface.

—**Amit Tiwari,** Amethi

Email your letters to the editor at *sunday.times@timesofindia.com* with 'Sunday Mailbox' in the subject line. Please mention your name and city

India's delimitation battles are costing its poorest voters

BY INVITATION

SHRUTI RAJAGOPALAN

With Lok Sabha seats frozen to 1971 Census numbers, India has moved far from the principle of one person, one vote. Today, an MP in Bihar represents 3.1 million people, a Kerala MP only 1.75 million. The same vote cast in Bihar carries less weight than in Kerala. What are the consequences of moving away from the principle?

Fertility does not fall because of family planning programmes. It falls with increases in income and female education, and with decreases in infant, child and maternal mortality rates. These long-run development outcomes happened earlier in the richer southern and western states. Poorer regions and states saw fertility fall later. As a result, the poor are underrepresented in Parliament, because poorer Indians disproportionately live in states that are developing more slowly.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were also poorer for longer, with higher fertility rates that fell later than other groups. ST fertility rates dropped even later relative to SCs. Article 330 reserves seats for SCs and STs by their share of population in each state, and the 2008 delimitation order and constitutional amendments narrowed the gap. Now, SC and ST representation is estimated at four seats short of their proportion across all states.

The youth are similarly concentrated in malapportioned states. Regions where fertility fell later naturally have a larger youth share and the largest constituencies.

As a group, on average, Muslims are poorer than Hindus, and fertility rates for Muslims fell later than fertility rates for Hindus. So, younger Muslims are more likely to live in malapportioned states. But the Hindu population is five to six times the population of Muslims, so in absolute terms, more Hindus are underrepresented in every malapportioned state. The Muslim-specific underrepresentation is real but must be contextualised in proportion to their population share.

How did India get here? This political bargain freezing Lok Sabha seats survived half a century because of India's fiscal centralisation and its uneven economic growth. The Union devolves only 41% of tax revenue to the states. Richer southern states contribute more tax revenue than they receive, and the poorer northern states receive more than they contribute. And richer states continue to grow faster than poorer ones, so the economic gap is widening.

The Lok Sabha is the body that decides how the fiscal pie is cut since money bills can bypass Rajya Sabha. Southern states already contribute more to that pie than they take out, and accepting population-based reapportionment in Parliament would mean losing political voice over how their own revenues get redistributed. This is why India's most developed states are fighting against the return to the principle of one person, one vote.

MATH & MONEY: Rajya Sabha can be reimagined with power over money bills and domicile requirements for members

The poorer, mostly northern states accepted the other side of the bargain for five decades. They lose seats relative to their population, but the revenue transfers cushioned the loss. Yet the groups bearing this cost within these states —the poor, the young, the Muslims, the SCs and STs whose fertility fell last — are not represented in campaigns against the freeze. Politicians in the north have been content with the revenue-for-representation trade-off.

Apportioning seats strictly to current population numbers, once we have a Census, without other changes, shifts political power northward, while fiscal centralisation keeps economic power in Delhi. Southern states lose both political power and, as a consequence, their share of revenue. The freeze is not a flaw in the system. It is the system.

Any durable solution that returns to equally apportioned constituencies across all states has to work on three fronts.

The first is fiscal federalism. States should keep more of the revenue they raise, while shrinking the central pool. The constraint is that states have diverged in economic growth since liberalisation, so poorer states cannot easily increase their own revenue.

The second is reimagining Rajya Sabha as a genuine council of states, with real power over money bills and real domicile requirements for its members. This requires amending Article 109, which lets money bills pass the Lok Sabha alone, and the Representation of People's Act to tie members to their states. How states are weighted in Rajya Sabha could be another possibility, with each state getting the same number of seats irrespective of population.

The third is portability of welfare entitlements. The agrarian poor, trapped in rural areas, lose their agricultural subsidies at the state border. Redesigning subsidies that make benefits more portable will help those in poorer states, especially once greater fiscal decentralisation raises migration pull from productive states.

The alternative is that India either betrays the constitutional commitment to one person, one vote or breaks the current fiscal bargain benefiting the poorer states. Both cannot survive untouched. ■

Rajagopalan is an economist at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University

The enemy within: Changing face of rape on screen

No torn blouses, leering villains and revenge sagas. Some filmmakers are moving beyond tropes to confront the ordinariness of sexual offenders and systems that enable everyday harm

FIGHT ON: 'Assi' looks at legal hurdles in a gang rape trial

Shruti.Sonal@timesofindia.com

For decades, Indian cinema has had a rape script with three roles. A lecherous villain, a woman violated, and a hero who arrived just in time to avenge her. That template is cracking with a new crop of films and shows where the perpetrator grows up listening to poetry about women's empowerment, speaks English, and belongs to your family.

'Chiraiya', a new web series that has ruffled feathers in India's ever-growing manosphere, puts a face to that. In a reputed joint family in Lucknow, a sari-clad Kamlesh — the elder bahu — asks a question that old cinema never had to answer: "As women, we've been taught to never cross the rekha like Sita, and we'd be safe. But what if we aren't safe inside the rekha itself?"

Her question follows an event that rarely makes it to popular culture: her sister-in-law being subjected to marital rape, an act not yet criminalised in India.

The show's afterlife online has seen one of the rape scenes turned into a meme in incel circles online, where it is used to argue that 'modern women' are okay with increasing their 'body count' before marriage but quick to label sex within marriage as rape.

Beyond these rage-bait debates, however, the show is emblematic of how a string of recent shows and films are tackling rape, moving beyond helpless victims, macho male saviours, and neat definitions of justice. They are taking on 'hushed' issues like marital rape, and also examining systemic failures, legal hurdles, and the everyday-ness of perpetrators — a far cry from voyeuristic tropes, torn blouses, and villains laughing as women beg 'bhagwan ke liye mujhe chod do'.

When the Villain Looks Like Us

'Chiraiya' director Shashant Shah says moving beyond villains was a "conscientious" decision, as is placing the story of rape in a liberal, middle-class family. Arun, who commits marital rape on multiple occasions, is shown as an English-speaking younger son of a progressive father, who writes evocative poetry about women's empowerment — but fails to stand up for his bahu.

"We wanted to show education has nothing to do with how women are getting treated, and it's not something that happens in lower-strata societies," he adds.

Assamese short film 'Xoudaamini' takes a similar approach. It begins where most films tend to end — with an intercaste couple eloping and marrying. But instead of a happy ending, the marriage unravels when the husband, in a drunken state, forces himself on his wife.

> Rape culture is not about a group of men gleefully fantasising about rape, but the normalisation of sexual objectification...both on and off the screen. Battling it involves looking inward. I fight with my own misogyny every day
>
> **Anubhav Sinha,** DIRECTOR

Priyanka Sohoria, the film's director, says the story was born out of personal experiences of women in her family. In 'Xoudaamini', the woman leaves home after the incident, along with her son. "After watching it, many women reached out to me and said they had gone through something similar, but couldn't leave," Sohoria adds. "That's why such stories are important — to show other possibilities." Released on YouTube for free, the short film has amassed nearly three lakh views.

The National Award-winning Malayalam film 'Aattam', too, avoids depicting the act itself, and instead focuses on what follows within a 'liberal' theatre group. The accused, a colleague, is defended by peers, while the survivor faces questions in a space she once considered safe.

SISTERHOOD: Web show 'Chiraiya' features an elder bahu standing up against marital rape

This move away from stereotyped villains towards familiar, everyday perpetrators has implications beyond cinema, says Nikunj Kulshreshtha, assistant professor at Jindal Global Law School. In a study of 4,485 Hindi films between 1980 and 2022, he analysed markers commonly associated with rape victims, such as whether the victim was educated, her relation with the perpetrator, whether she struggled physically, and her dressing.

"I found that these films were not only pushing the image of an ideal rape victim, but also the ideal offender," says Nikunj, pointing to the long-standing depiction of rapists as visibly deviant men with criminal pasts or addictions. "Such depictions impact how the judiciary views offenders, and often damage the credibility of victim narratives, as a lot of people have difficulties in believing that a boy from a good family could be a potential sexual offender," he adds.

Takes More Than a Hero

Along with the changing depiction of victims, the hero too is being reimagined. In older films such as 'Shahenshah', 'Damini', and 'Insaf Ka Tarazu', rape often functioned as a plot device to trigger a male protagonist-led revenge arc. While such narratives persist in some recent blockbusters like 'Dhurandhar 2' and 'Maharaja', a growing number of filmmakers are moving away from it.

In Anubhav Sinha's 'Assi', a courtroom drama centred around a gang rape where Taapsee Pannu plays a fierce lawyer, there are no dramatic victory speeches or cathartic endings. Instead, there's a call for reflection, with the movie title alluding to the NCRB data of over 80 rapes happening every day in the country.

"I was not interested in creating a hero, or making this incident the podium the hero stands on. I also didn't want to blame a single perpetrator, or even the police or the judiciary in isolation," Sinha says. "Maybe the onus rests on us. There's a lot left to be desired in the way we raise our boys. On the other hand, from a young age, we ask girls to keep quiet and ignore small acts of harassment."

'Chiraiya' too resists a cliched saviour saga to focus on imperfect allies and female solidarity. At its centre is Kamlesh, who initially struggles to recognise marital rape but gradually educates herself and stands by her sister-in-law, acknowledging that women often pass on and perpetuate patriarchal norms, too.

"I wanted to focus on this aspect of sisterhood because even today, a lot of women feel that they don't have anybody to go to when something like this happens to them," Shah says.

Unlearning The Everyday

More recent narratives are also widening the lens. Oscar-nominated crime drama 'Santosh' examines caste bias and corruption in the investigation of a Dalit woman's rape and murder, while the sequel to the successful 'Dhurandhar' briefly touches on sexual violence against men — as a way of exerting masculinity and power — often ignored in mainstream depictions.

"It's more about looking inward. I'm fighting with my own misogyny every day," says Sinha, recalling how he grew up in a household where he would get his plate of food before his sister.

Unlearning such "small" acts, he argues, is crucial in battling 'rape culture'. "We have to understand that it's not a group of men gleefully fantasising about rape. It's the normalisation of sexual objectification. Rape is probably the by-product of that...both on and off the screen."

From Russian twists to political poses

Mrs. Funnybones

TWINKLE KHANNA

8am After 20-odd years of yoga, I've started lifting weights. This whole personal trainer business baffles me. I invite someone home, offer him tea, and then pay him to torture me. 'Come on, give me 60 Russian twists,' he says, handing me a 4 kg weight.

'Is there a neutral name for this?' I ask, 'You know, these days even health comes with a dose of ideology. Look at Namita Thapar of Shark Tank fame. She posted a video saying namaz has health benefits and resembles a few yoga poses. The outrage caused her company's share price to drop. If I post a video doing these Russian twists, what if Ukraine takes it personally?'

He responds by making me do two sets of Romanian deadlifts. 'What are these exercises you are making me do — Russian twist, French press, American kettlebell swing?' I ask him, 'Next, instead of Jumping Jacks, you will tell me to do The Strait of Hormuz. Open and close repeatedly. I feel like instead of working out, I'm negotiating trade agreements. Let's find terms without national, religious or ideological references. You never know when someone gets offended and wants to do a Pawanmuktasana all over your X timeline. Oh, I have to find a new term for that pose too now, don't I?'

10am Sipping coffee and scrolling Instagram, I see posts about a woman who has gone viral for screaming at a minister for blocking traffic with his rally. Ironically, the rally was about the delay in implementing the Women's Reservation Bill. While women across the country wait to get more seats at the parliamentary table, this Mumbaikar got out of the backseat of her car, huffed, puffed, and blew an entire rally down.

1pm Global warming and hot flushes have ensured I spend my days in linen dresses and shorts. I am following a new hack to lower blood sugar by walking for ten minutes after each meal. Since it's sweltering outside, I start marching on the spot in my khaki shorts. I may look like a newly recruited member of the RSS, but that doesn't bother me. After a few minutes, I watch 'Toaster' to alleviate my boredom. The movie begins with Rajkummar Rao, who plays a miser. He reminds me of my metabolism, which saves every calorie and stores it in a pouch around my stomach for future use. Then I see a cameo by Patralekha, the film's producer, who has recently been trolled for gaining weight. When a woman has produced a movie and a child simultaneously, I think we should all be focusing on her abilities rather than her appearance.

Society does seem to have a grudge against overweight people. I was talking to a friend on Mounjaro whose weight loss stopped after 5 kilos. 'I think it was fake stuff because I just read about a big scam in Gurugram where counterfeit Mounjaro worth Rs 56 lakh was seized!'

'It's really wrong,' I say, 'Those who are making fake drugs should at least use them for social activism. Take on colourism. Replace glutathione drips that people use to get fairer skin with plain saline. Why is the scam economy against fat people? They should go after the genetically blessed skinny ones.'

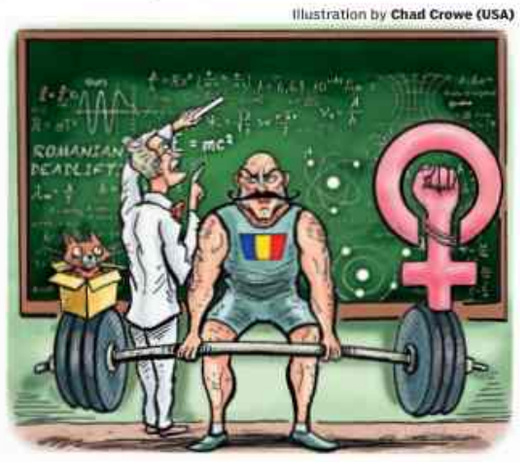
3pm My sister calls and asks what I am doing. 'I am reading a graphic novel about quantum mechanics,' I tell her. 'I would love to understand more about the topic, but the closest I've gotten is when I went to Karan Johar's house.'

'He discussed quantum physics with you?' I laugh, 'No, but he lives opposite a building called Quantum Park.'

She sighs, 'Your jokes really suck.'

We then talk about the woman who stopped the rally and the Women's Reservation Bill. 'The bill reserving 33% of seats for women was passed earlier, but with the condition that it would only be implemented after delimitation and a census,' I tell her, 'While everyone argues about seats per state, women's rights are still on a waitlist. Come to think of it, the bill could work as a quantum physics experiment. Officially alive and functionally dead at the same time. You remember Schrödinger's cat, where the animal is placed in a sealed box and is considered both alive and dead until observed. Schrödinger could have used the bill instead of a cat, and he wouldn't even need to put it in a box.'

Illustration by **Chad Crowe (USA)**



What are these exercises — Russian twist, French press, American kettlebell swing? Next, you will tell me to do Strait of Hormuz. Open and close repeatedly. I feel like instead of working out, I'm negotiating trade agreements

'Wow, you've been reading a lot,' my sister says. I don't tell her the only reason I know this is because I accidentally clicked on Barkha Dutt's Instagram story while watching unboxing videos.

7pm Every night, after dinner, I kneel with my legs folded under me and then sit back on my heels. A posture familiar across multiple cultures. Earlier, I would call it vajrasana, but in my new quest for neutral terms, I have renamed it Orthopedic Knee Hold.

Shakespeare was wrong when he said, 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' Replace rose with pose and get ready for outrage. When it's time for me to march on the spot again, I pull out my phone and check my Amazon account. I had ordered a book for my daughter, and it says it's out for delivery with three options: track it, get it sooner, or update my address. Maybe Amazon should handle the Women's Reservation Bill. It's been out for delivery since 2023 and is still stuck in traffic behind yet another political rally.

INQUIZITIVE

by **JOY BHATTACHARJYA**

1 What connects the Slovenian city of Lipica, known as Lipizza in Italian, the paintings of George Stubbs, and a gift from the Greeks to the Trojans?

2 SIR is an exercise undertaken by the Election Commission to ensure that only eligible voters are included

in the electoral rolls. If the 'S' stands for Special, and the 'I' for Intensive, what does the 'R' in SIR stand for, something often done before examinations?

3 Which American city has professional sports teams named the Astros and the Rockets as the Lyndon Johnson Space Centre, where all human spaceflight testing and flight controls are conducted, is located there?

4 Double Ka Meetha is a dessert closely related to the Shahi Tukda which is a staple at weddings, Eid celebrations and other festive occasions. With which city is it most closely associated?

5 If New Zealand tourism got a big boost from the 'Lord of the Rings' locales, which online and television series gave a huge boost to the tourism industry of Croatia, specifically those of Dubrovnik, Split and Trogir?

6 On September 21, 1995, reports of which specific activity of a Ganesh idol caused millions to flock to temples in India and around the world?

7 A hog is another name for a domesticated pig, but HOG is an acronym for the fans and users of which specific form of transportation?

8 The one with matted hair, the king of the art of dancing and the blue-throated one are the literal translations of three of the names of which Hindu deity?

9 'You're the One For Me', is a bi-lingual song written and performed by Australian cricketer Brett Lee. Who performed along with him in the song, teaching him how to court the Indian girl of his dreams?

10 The name of which extremely coveted variety of wool is a anglicisation of the name of an Indian state?

ANSWERS

1 | Horses(Lipizzaner horses are famous, Stubbs was famous for his horse portraits, and the Trojan horse contained Greek soldiers)
2 | Revision
3 | Houston
4 | Hyderabad, a staple of Deccani Mughlai cuisine
5 | Game of Thrones(Dubrovnik was the primary location for Kings Landing)
6 | A Ganesh idol had appeared to drink milk
7 | Harley Davidson motorcycles, Harley owners group
8 | Shiva(Jatin, Nataraja and Neelkanth)
9 | Asha Bhosle
10 | Cashmere, from Kashmir

500 yrs after the First Battle of Panipat, a turning point fades from memory

It took roughly 300 minutes and changed India, but the anniversary barely makes a ripple beyond worn-out memorials and a few residents keeping bits of its past alive

Sneha.Bhura@timesofindia.com

On a drowsy afternoon in Babarpur village in Panipat, around 90 km north of Delhi, dogs sprawl across the road. Outside a cycle repair shop humming with flies, Mahesh Raj and his friend Ashok Kumar, an auto driver, sit passing time. Ask them how the village got its name, and the answer comes easily.

"Many years ago, before we were born, this man called Babur came, stayed the night and changed it. Bas, tabhi se Babarpur ho gaya," says Raj, the shop owner. There is no talk of armies or the First Battle of Panipat, fought nearby in 1526, where Timurid prince Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi of the Delhi Sultanate. For Raj, Babur is simply a traveller who stopped to rest.

Babarpur was renamed Guru Nanakpur in 2022. "Actually, it was always called Guru Nanakpur before Babur," he says, offering his own version of history. While some signboards today may still read Babarpur, history hardly registers in everyday life here.

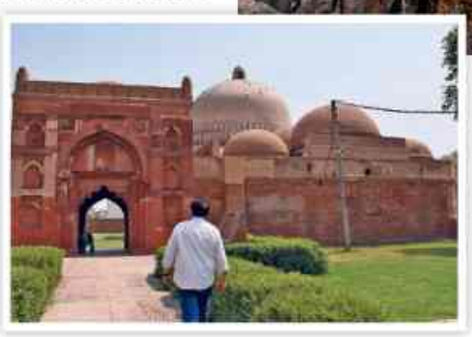
This month marks 500 years since the First Battle of Panipat, fought on April 21, 1526, between Babur and Ibrahim Lodi. The clash ended the Delhi Sultanate, killed its last ruler and laid the foundation of Mughal rule in India. Yet, while the anniversary is noted in academic and military-history circles, there is little sign of wider commemoration or heritage tourism in Haryana.

In Panipat itself, the past is hard to locate beyond a few deserted memorials, gardens and a dimly-lit war museum. There are no visible heritage trails or public conversations about what these battles meant.

"I would rank the First Battle of Panipat as one of the most important turning points in Indian history. It was fought for just 300 minutes and resulted in 300 years of Mughal rule," says military historian Ajay Singh, author of 'India's Battlefields: From Kurukshetra to Balakot', which also examines the three battles of Panipat. He says Babur's victory also changed how wars were fought in India. Earlier, warfare was static and elephant-driven; Babur introduced mobility and firepower. "Gunpowder had come to India, but no one had realised its potential until the First Battle of Panipat. The flash, smoke and explosions scared the enemy, who turned back and trampled over their own armies," says Singh.

He feels the Panipat Museum, run by the Battles of Panipat Memorial Society, should have been developed into a national-level museum with more interactive exhibits or a light and sound show. "But the first battle was mainly two outsiders fighting each other — Babur and Ibrahim Lodi — which may partly explain the apathy."

Photos: Anushka Kogta



CONFLICT CORRIDOR: The 1526 battle trail runs through Kala Amb Park, which has a mural on the fierce clash, and extends to Kabuli Bagh Masjid (left) that Babur built to mark his victory

MEMORY KEEPERS

Yet, some residents preserve Panipat's past in their own ways. One such figure is Ram Mohan Rai, a Supreme Court lawyer who calls himself a student of history and, with his wife, oversees Hali Apna School, whose auditorium walls are lined with portraits of Panipat's notable figures and Urdu couplets that serve as a small archive of the city's past.

> Panipat was once far more than a battlefield. It was home to Islamic scholars and Sufi traditions. Faith spread not through conquest but ideas like Ram-Rahim is one. Women had their names on house nameplates
>
> **Ram Mohan Rai,** LAWYER

Rai insists Panipat was once far more than a battlefield. "There were hundreds of Islamic scholars. Sufi traditions ran deep. Faith spread not through conquest but ideas like 'Ram-Rahim is one'," he says. He also recalls a society where women managed households, farms and even had their names on house nameplates.

That world, he says, did not survive Partition. Rai could lead history walks across the city, beginning at Kala Amb Park — linked to the Third Battle of Panipat, where legend says a mango tree turned black after the bloodshed — and moving on to Ibrahim Lodi's tomb and Kabuli Bagh mosque, built by Babur after his victory. He even claims to know where Lodi's favourite elephant is buried. But the route is far from picturesque, cutting through clogged drains and industrial sprawl. "Mahoul kharab hai (the environment is bad)," he says

HISTORY BY CHANCE

What if history were seen not through grand monuments, but through the lives it shaped? What, then, should a place like Panipat commemorate? Even if Panipat, traced to the Mahabharata as Panduprastha, is the site of three pivotal battles in Indian history, historian Uday S Kulkarni, author of 'Solstice at Panipat', argues that many equally decisive battles across north India have faded from memory. "It is largely an accident that all three battles were fought at Panipat. It so happened that this region lies in the plains of North India, before Delhi," says Kulkarni. Armies, he explains, avoided fighting in Delhi itself; they met invaders in advance, and Panipat offered the open, flat ground suited to large battles.

Five hundred years after the first battle, the city itself moves on much as it always has. Inderjit Singh, a member of the All India Kisan Sabha in Haryana, says most people here have little reason to care. "The fight was anyway for Delhi, not Panipat." He recalls an old school joke: when a teacher asks why the Third Battle of Panipat was fought, students reply, "because the first two were fought."

Germany readies naval units for possible Hormuz mission, RP says

Germany is sending naval units to the Mediterranean in preparation for possible deployment in an international mission in the Strait of Hormuz, according to Rheinische Post.

"We will deploy a minesweeper to the Mediterranean and provide it with a command and supply ship," defence minister Boris Pistorius told the newspaper in an interview published on Saturday. He didn't specify when the two vessels are scheduled to depart.

Pistorius emphasised that an end to the hostilities in the region is a prerequisite for any German deployment.

He also noted that such a deployment would only permissible if parliament gives the green light. "To save time, we have decided to deploy parts of the German units to the Mediterranean early on so that — once the mandate is approved — we do not lose any further time," Pistorius said. BLOOMBERG

Iran minister may fly to Russia to discuss efforts to end war

Araghchi: 'Yet To See If US Truly Serious About Diplomacy'

▶ Continued from page 1

Iran's foreign ministry said Araghchi had left Islamabad and arrived in Muscat on Saturday for meetings with Omani officials. He is also expected to travel on to Russia to discuss efforts to end the war, which the United States and Israel began against Iran on Feb 28.

Araghchi described his Pakistan trip as "very fruitful" in a post on X, adding he had shared Iran's position on a "workable framework to permanently end the war".

"Have yet to see if the US is truly serious about diplomacy," he posted.

Even before Trump's announcement, the prospect of new talks had been uncertain, with Iranian state television saying Araghchi had no plans to meet with the Americans, and that Islamabad would serve as a bridge to "convey" Iranian proposals.

Araghchi, before leaving for Islamabad, on Friday said that he was embarking on a timely tour of Islamabad, Muscat, and Moscow, and the purpose of his visits is to "closely coordinate with our partners on bilateral matters and consult on regional developments". "Our neighbours are our priority," he said.

Pakistan foreign minister Dar said his country is facilitating the Iran-US talks and it will continue with efforts to achieve peace in the region and beyond. Dar, who held a meeting at the ministry of foreign affairs to review the latest developments, said Pakistan's official policy statements on the Iran-US facilitation process are only those issued by official sources. "Unnamed Pakistani officials or sources, whether quoted in print or social media, do not reflect Pakistan's official position," he added. PTI, AFP

Reuters

Trump arrives to board Air Force One in Maryland Friday to travel to Florida to address a cryptocurrency conference being held at his Mar-a-Lago club

Iran govt resumes commercial flights

Cairo: Iran resumed commercial flights from Tehran's international airport on Saturday for the first time since the conflict with the US and Israel began about two months ago. Iran's state-run television reported that flights took off from the Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran bound for Istanbul, Oman's capital of Muscat and the Saudi city of Medina. AP

US now allows Venezuela to pay for Maduro legal team

The United States will allow Venezuela to pay for Nicolas Maduro's legal defence, a court filing showed, lifting a roadblock on the ousted leader's trial on drug and other charges in New York.

US Treasury sanctions on Venezuela had previously blocked Venezuela — now ruled by Maduro's deputy — from sending funds to pay for attorneys to represent the leftist strongman and his wife.

Both were snatched by US forces in an overnight raid in early Jan and flown to New York to face federal criminal charges. The Maduros' defence had sought to have their cases dismissed on grounds that blocking the funding violated the US Constitution's right to counsel of one's choice.

A court filing on Friday by the US prosecutor in New York said the Treasury's "Office of Foreign Assets Control has issued amended licenses to counsel for defendants" that authorises them to "receive payments from the Government of Venezuela." The funds must have been made available after March 5, 2026, and can't come from US-regulated oil sales.

Since removing Maduro, the US has effectively controlled the export of Venezuelan oil. The funds go into special accounts overseen by Washington. According to the Friday filing, the defence acknowledges the sanctions waiver and is lifting its motion to dismiss the charges, for now. AFP

4th aircraft carrier of China likely to be nuclear-powered

Beijing: A video released by the Chinese navy highlighting China's blue-water naval ambitions has sparked speculation that its fourth aircraft carrier currently being built will be a nuclear-powered one. 'Into The Deep' was released Wednesday to mark the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army Navy showcased Chinese navy's transition from maritime ambitions and coastal defences.

The video also highlighted China's "blue-water" navy capable of deep-sea operations. It also showed a compass being handed down through generations of naval officers named after the three aircraft carriers Liao Ning, Shan Dong, and Fu Jian currently in operation.

But a fourth character was named He Jian, hinting that it could be a nuclear-powered ship because "He" sounds like the Chinese word for "nuclear" and "Jian" is the word for a "ship", the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

China has not officially confirmed it. Satellite images taken over years suggest the ship is of a similar size to America's nuclear-powered Gerald R Ford-class carriers, heightening speculation about whether a similar propulsion method will be used. PTI

Pakistan launches sat from China

Islamabad: Pakistan on Saturday successfully launched an indigenous electro-optical satellite, with the Foreign Office terming it a "significant milestone" that will enhance capabilities in remote sensing. The satellite was launched from China's Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre, the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement. PTI

Palestinians vote in first elections since Gaza war

Palestinians in the West Bank and central Gaza voted on Saturday in municipal elections, the first since the Gaza war erupted, marked by low turnout and a narrow slate of contenders.

Nearly 1.5 million people were registered to vote in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, as well as 70,000 people in Gaza's Deir el-Balah area, according to the Ramallah-based Central Elections Commission. By 5pm, turnout in the West Bank reached 40.62%; but participation in Deir el-Balah was just 21.2%. AFP

Hegseth doesn't deny mine-clearing could take 6 mths

Washington: President Donald Trump says the US Navy is clearing Iranian mines from the Strait of Hormuz, a vital sea route for oil shipments whose disruption is increasingly threatening the global economy.

Sweeping for underwater explosives could take months despite a tenuous ceasefire between the United States and Iran in the weekslong war, experts say. Any future claims that the US cleared the waterway where 20% of the world's oil typically passes might fail to convince commercial freighters and their insurers that it is finally safe. "You don't even have to have laid mines — you just have to make people believe that you've laid mines," said Emma Salisbury, a scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute's National Security Program.

Pentagon officials have recently told US lawmakers it would likely take six months to clear the mines that Iran has set in the strait, according to a person familiar with the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive information. The information was delivered during a classified briefing at the House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday.

When asked about the estimate, defence secretary Pete Hegseth told reporters Friday that the military would not speculate on a timeline, but he did not deny it. "Allegedly, that was something that was said," Hegseth said at a Pentagon news conference. "But we feel confident in our ability, in the correct period of time, to clear any mines that we identify."

Adm Brad Cooper, the top US commander in the Middle East, recently told reporters that the military would be working to clear mines from the strait. He did not offer details. There is no indication that the US military is using warships, its most visible mine-clearing assets, in the strait now.

But the Navy also has divers and small teams of explosive ordnance disposal technicians in the region that are capable of clearing mines. They are a less obvious target than a large warship. Experts also say some mine-clearing equipment could be moved off ships and deployed from land. It's easier for Iran to lay mines than it is to find them, adds an expert. AP

Mexico: 2 dead US agents had no permission to raid drug lab

Mexico said Saturday two US agents who died after an operation to dismantle a suspected Mexican narcotics lab had no permission to be carrying out operations of this kind.

The April 19 incident in the northern state of Chihuahua, which also left two Mexican officials dead, has created fresh diplomatic friction between the US and Mexico, and heaped pressure on President Claudia Sheinbaum.

Immigration records showed one of the two agents entered the country as a "visitor" while the other used a "diplomatic passport," Mexico's security ministry said in a statement. "Neither had formal accreditation to participate in operational activities within national territory."

Several US media outlets have reported that the two Americans, who have not been identified, worked for the Central Intelligence Agency. The US ambassador in Mexico has said they were US embassy employees. The security ministry's statement noted that Mexican law forbids foreign agents from participating in operations on Mexico's soil. AFP

Attacks kill five, injure over 40 in Dnipro; 1 in Russia

Russian drone and missile strikes on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro killed at least five people and wounded 46, authorities said Saturday. The bodies of four people were found in the ruins of a house destroyed in overnight attacks, Dnipropetrovsk regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said.

"The Russians have been hitting Dnipro and other cities and communities practically all night," Hanzha wrote on Telegram of the attacks, which caused fires to break out across Dnipro and partially destroyed several apartment buildings, businesses and a private house. Another person was killed in a separate Russian attack on Dnipro Saturday afternoon.

In Russia, a woman was killed and a man was seriously wounded by a Ukrainian drone strike in the border region of Belgorod, local officials said. AP

British fighters scramble as drone crashes in Romania

Two British fighter jets scrambled and Romanian authorities on Saturday evacuated more than 200 people from a zone where a drone crashed after Russian strikes in neighbouring Ukraine, authorities said.

Romania, a Nato member, has repeatedly seen its airspace violated and drone fragments fall on its territory since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in Feb 2022.

But President Nicusor Dan said: "This is the first incident where Romanian property has actually been damaged, a threshold we take very seriously." Foreign minister Oana Toiu summoned the Russian ambassador, a statement said.

Two British Royal Air Force Typhoon fighter jets based at Borcea in Romania scrambled after the incident. UK defence ministry denied reports that the planes shot down Russian drones. AFP

US sanctions giant China refiner Hengli

The United States has sanctioned one of China's largest private oil refiners over its links to Iran, a move that ramps up economic pressure on Tehran but also risks irking Beijing just weeks ahead of an expected leaders' summit.

The Treasury department's office of foreign assets control announced on Friday that it had imposed penalties on Hengli Petrochemical (Dalian) Refinery, which operates a modern oil-processing and chemical complex in Liaoning province, citing its purchases from Iran.

China's large state-owned entities tend to stay away from blacklisted oil, wary of getting tangled in the US sanctions machine. But private refiners — including the army of smaller processors often dubbed teapots — have been Tehran's most important consumers, making the most of discounted prices. BLOOMBERG

Ship seizures violate international law, says shipping body

Doha: A prominent global shipping body has criticised the US and Iran over their recent seizures of commercial vessels in the Gulf region, particularly at the Strait of Hormuz, over each other's virtual control on the global energy transit, saying such actions violate international law, and called for the immediate release of detained seafarers. In an interview with Al Jazeera, John Stawpert, marine director of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), said seafarers must be allowed to carry out their duties "freely and without persecution". Stawpert, whose organisation represents around 80% of the global merchant fleet, said the detention of vessels for political purposes undermines the principle of freedom of navigation. ANI

6 killed in Israeli strikes on south Lebanon: State media

Israeli PM Orders Attacks On Hezbollah

Six people were killed on Saturday in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon, Lebanon's state news agency reported, while the Israeli military said Hezbollah had fired rockets at Israel, the latest challenges to a tenuous, recently extended ceasefire.

Later in the day, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the military to strike Lebanon's Hezbollah hard after what the army said was a string of ceasefire violations.

According to a brief statement from his office, the PM "ordered the IDF to forcefully attack Hezbollah targets in Lebanon", after the military said the Iran-backed group had violated a ceasefire that was extended earlier this week.

AP

Wife of Fadi Al Zein, who lost both his homes in Israeli strikes, sits on the balcony of their damaged home as traffic passes below in Beirut's southern suburbs, Lebanon, Saturday

The ceasefire agreed between Israel and Lebanon has led to a significant reduction in hostilities, but Israel and Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah have continued to clash in southern Lebanon, where Israel has kept soldiers in self-declared buffer zone.

The Israeli military said on Saturday it struck loaded rocket launchers of Hezbollah in three locations in southern Lebanon overnight and targeted several Hezbollah fighters in separate strikes. It said later in the day that it had also struck facilities used by Hezbollah's elite Radwan forces in southern Lebanon. REUTERS

Minority group condemns brutal murder of Nayan Sadhu in B'desh

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (HBCUC) on Saturday strongly condemned the brutal murder of Nayan Sadhu and demanded tough punishment for those responsible.

On April 22, the charred body of Nayan Sadhu, who served at Sri Sri Sarvajanin Shiv Kali Temple at Khurmanshkul Union of Cox's Bazar Sadar Upazila, was found hanging from a tree in a deep forest far from the temple.

A human chain and protest rally were held under the banner of various outfits at National Press Club premises in Dhaka on Friday. Minority Oikya Morcha, Jubo Oikya Parishad and Chhatra Oikya Parishad — affiliate bodies of Oikya Parishad (Unity Council) — participated in the demonstrations.

According to HBCUC, on the evening of April 19, two unidentified individuals had called out Nayan Sadhu from the temple. Following his disappearance, the temple's head, Anjana Shil, immediately informed local police station. His body was discovered three days later.

Jackson estate faces sexual abuse allegations from 4 siblings

Los Angeles: As the biopic of the King of Pop Michael Jackson garners positive response, the late superstar's estate is facing a new wave of molestation allegations. The charges have been levelled by four siblings from New Jersey who say they were groomed and abused for years and that the many handlers in his entourage willingly enabled it all, reports 'Variety'.

The lawsuit by the four siblings, three brothers and a sister, was filed in Feb in Los Angeles federal court. It gained attention on Friday after they gave an interview to the New York Times about the alleged abuse and the legal manipulation that the family claims they endured at the hands of the Jackson estate, long after the superstar's death in 2009.

As per 'Variety', the complaint names the Jackson estate and the attorneys who lead it, John Branca and John McLain, and private investigator Herman Weisberg as defendants. The complaint includes disturbing details of alleged abuse committed while Jackson was travelling in the US and abroad on concert tours. It alleges that Jackson also abused the four siblings in their own home in New Jersey, when Jackson was visiting with his own children.

The estate termed the suit "a desperate money grab" and "shakedown attempt," and claimed that the family sought money from the Jackson estate in exchange for not going public with their allegations. IANS

Wikimedia, Indonesia reach a compromise

The Wikimedia Foundation said on Saturday that it has found a compromise with the Indonesian govt, which had threatened to block Wikipedia over domestic registration rules the foundation feared were overly invasive.

ROW OVER REGN

Under a 2020 regulation, all electronic system providers (PSEs) must register in Indonesia for what the govt calls legal and user protection purposes before making their services available. Critics term the provision that requires registered PSEs to take down content deemed as "causing public unrest and disturbing public order" as a free speech restriction.

The foundation said it had a "very constructive meeting" earlier in the week with the communication and digital affairs ministry, which gave "assurances that there would be no unlawful content takedown orders or data disclosure requirements that could put the Wikimedia community-led model at risk".

The govt last week gave the foundation seven days to register or face its services, including Wikipedia Indonesia. The ministry did not respond to an AFP request for comment. AFP

US adding firing squads, electrocution, gassing to federal execution methods

US' Trump administration plans to add firing squads, electrocution and gas asphyxiation as alternative methods of executing people convicted of the gravest federal crimes, it announced on Friday, noting difficulties in obtaining drugs for lethal injections.

The recommendation came in a justice department report fulfilling Trump's promise to resume capital punishment at the federal level in his second term, although it will likely be several years before another federal execution can be scheduled.

Shortly before his first term ended in 2021, Trump, resumed executions at the federal level after a 20-year gap, putting 13 federal prisoners to death with lethal injections in his final few months in office. There had been just three federal executions in the preceding 50 years.

ANGRY SAM

Most executions in the US are carried out by state govts. Returning to the White House last year, Trump rescinded a moratorium on federal executions by his predecessor, former President Joe Biden.

Trump's justice department is now seeking the death penalty against more than 40 defendants, although none have yet gone to trial.

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, in his 52-page report, told the Bureau of Prisons to modify its execution protocol "to include additional, constitutional manners of execution that are currently provided for by the law of certain states," pointing to the older methods of firing squads and electrocution, and the new gas asphyxiation method pioneered by Alabama in 2024. This will allow for executions "even if a specific drug is unavailable," the report said. REUTERS

DAILY PLANET

Reuters

Smoke rises in forest areas as wildfires continue in Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture, Japan, on Saturday. More than 1,000 firefighters in northern Japan battled to contain two wildfires for a fourth straight day on Saturday, as the blazes pushed closer to residential areas and forced more than 3,000 residents to evacuate

Tunisia suspends one of Africa's oldest rights grps

Authorities in Tunisia have ordered a one-month suspension of the Tunisian League for Human Rights, one of the oldest rights groups in Africa and the Arab world and part of the National Dialogue Quartet awarded the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, in the latest move raising concerns over a widening crackdown on civil society. The league confirmed the suspension in a statement late Friday, warning that the decision amounted to "a serious and arbitrary violation of freedom of association" and "a direct assault" on one of Tunisia's key democratic gains. President Kais Saied has often cited foreign funding, which rights groups sometimes rely on, as a threat to Tunisia, using it to fuel a populist narrative and accuse his political opponents and social justice activists of being foreign agents and stirring unrest at home.

Ahead of trial, Musk drops fraud claims against Sam

Elon Musk dropped his fraud claims against OpenAI and co-founders Sam Altman and Greg Brockman, narrowing the scope of his lawsuit against his business rivals on the eve of trial. US district judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers Friday agreed to Musk's request to "streamline" the case, leaving just two claims to proceed to trial of the 26 included in his Nov 2024 complaint. Jury selection is set for Monday in federal court in Oakland, California. Musk alleges the artificial intelligence startup abandoned its founding mission as a nonprofit to benefit humanity when it took billions of dollars in backing from Microsoft and planned its restructuring as a for-profit business. Musk is seeking as much as $134 billion in damages that he has asked be directed to OpenAI's charitable arm, if he wins at trial.

Hottest phone for US kids right now is a $100 landline

When Justin Finn's two elementary-schoolers come home, they're not turning on the TV or grabbing an iPad. Instead, they head straight to the phone — not a smartphone, but a landline. Calls come in on their cream-coloured Tin Can, the $100 landline-inspired, Wi-Fi-enabled device that's gone viral over the past 12 months.

"It's not uncommon for the phone to start ringing within minutes," Finn said. "There is a real excitement around it that we have not seen with many other additions within the home."

Since debuting in April 2025, the retro-styled device has become a hit, with hundreds of thousands sold, mostly thanks to word-of-mouth recommendations, according to the company. That's despite limited marketing and a small fundraising haul, including $3.5 million over the summer and a $12 million seed round in Dec led by Greylock Partners.

Photo: Tin Can

FIGHTING SCREENS: Tin Can

The Tin Can plugs into a wall outlet and includes a speakerphone, speed dial buttons and an answering machine feature. The phone, which comes in assorted bright colours, lets people make free calls between Tin Cans and emergency services. Users can pay $10 a month for the ability to ring and receive calls from parent-approved external numbers. The device is available in the US and Canada.

Tin Can has found a welcome reception at a time when parents, educators and lawmakers are searching for an antidote to constant screen time. Countries around the world are considering social media curbs for young users after Australia enacted a ban for under-16s.

In the US, meanwhile, Meta Platforms and Alphabet's Google lost a landmark court case in Los Angeles last month brought by a 20-year-old woman who said her addiction to these platforms fuelled mental health problems.

Orders from schools are among the fastest-growing market segment for Tin Cans, according to the Seattle-based company, Tin Can Untechnologies. The startup has seen an "overwhelming demand" from educational institutions, it told Bloomberg News, with thousands of administrators across the US considering bulk orders.

CEO Chet Kittleson, 38, founded Tin Can about a year and a half ago in response to the anxiety he felt around planning after-school playdates for his children. Growing up in the '90s, he realised, the landline was his social network. He believes the way kids communicate today, via text or video call, does a disservice to building communication skills. Everyone should know how to "navigate silence in a meaningfully different way," he said, referring to the natural lulls in voice calls.

Finn said he quickly noticed significant progress in his kids' manners. "They are more thoughtful in how they speak, better at listening, and just more confident overall," he said. Finn's kindergartner learned the hard way that 911 works on the Tin Can, resulting in a surprise visit to the family's front door. BLOOMBERG

"HE'S (VIRAT KOHLI) ALWAYS LOOKING TO GET BETTER. HE IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE BEST PLAYERS THAT I'VE EVER KNOWN WHO READS THE SITUATION AND CALCULATES HOW THE GAME NEEDS TO BE PANNED OUT. HE'S THE BEST CHASER TO HAVE EVER PLAYED THE GAME."
—Dale Steyn | Former SA pacer

Records fall, Kings rise

Rahul's Record 152* Takes Delhi to 264/2 But Prabhsimran & Shreyas Power PBKS To Highest Successful Chase In Men's T20 History

Pics: Anindya Chattopadhyay

CAPTAIN COOL: Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 36-ball 71 ensured Punjab's win

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New Delhi: There are days in IPL history that live forever. Days when the game exceeds itself, goes somewhere it has never been before and leaves you wondering whether you actually witnessed what you think you did. Saturday at the Arun Jaitley Stadium was one of those days.

After KL Rahul's staggering 152 not out had redrawn the limits of what seemed possible in a scorching Delhi afternoon, Punjab Kings walked out to chase 265. Not 200. Not 220. Two hundred and sixty-five. They got there with six wickets remaining.

Prabhsimran Singh and Priyansh Arya ensured the chase never felt like a tall order. From the first ball, this was a team that had decided the target was irrelevant. Prabhsimran (76 off 26b; 9x4, 5x6) was something otherworldly — an innings of viscerally violent hitting.

Arya (43 off 17b; 2x4, 5x6), at the other end, was no passenger. Together they crashed 116 in the Powerplay, with nine fours and 10 sixes between them, reducing what should have been a fortress total into something negotiable. It was the second-highest Powerplay score in IPL history. Then came the wobble. Axar Patel removed Arya, Kuldeep Yadav trapped Prabhsimran LBW and Cooper Connolly fell too, bowled by a Kuldeep googly.

In 16 balls, Punjab had gone from 126/0 to 145/3 and suddenly Delhi sensed something. A game that had felt over began to breathe again.

Enter Shreyas Iyer. Calm. Precise. Unruffled. Iyer's unbeaten 71 off 36 balls (3x4, 7x6) was not the flashiest innings of the day. But it was, arguably, the most important. With Shashank Singh providing sensible company with 19 not out off 10, Iyer took Punjab home as if the whole exercise was a formality.

Earlier, Rahul (152* off 67b; 16x4, 9x6) scripted an innings that felt less like a return to form and more like a reclamation of identity. He didn't just score a breathtaking ton for Delhi Capitals — he dismantled, dictated and dazzled with a freedom that has often eluded him in the shortest format.

Rahul began with a couple of crisp boundaries off Xavier Bartlett but the defining moment came when Shashank Singh spilled him at deep square leg off Arshdeep Singh. It wasn't a sitter but misses against batters of Rahul's calibre tend to echo.

If Rahul's early strokes were about timing, Nitish Rana's were about intent. Rana's 91 off 44 balls (11x4, 4x6) ensured Delhi never dipped after Pathum Nissanka fell early to Arshdeep, with Prabhsimran taking the catch behind. Rahul and Rana then put on 220 for the second wicket — the second-highest stand in IPL history, behind Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers' 229 in 2016.

Rahul reached his hundred off 47 balls and surged past 150, finishing with the highest individual IPL score by an Indian and the third-highest overall, behind Chris Gayle's 175* and Brendon McCullum's 158*. And yet, on this absurd afternoon, that was not enough.

152* KL Rahul's 67-ball knock in the highest individual score by an Indian in T20s. The previous highest score beloged to Tilak Varma who hammered a 67-ball 151 during a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match for Hyderabad against Meghalaya in Nov 2024. It is also the highest score by an Indian in the IPL and third in the all-time scoring list.

265/4 Punjab Kings have established a record for the highest successful chase in the history of T20, bettering their score of 262/2 vs KKR (261/6) at Eden Gardens, Kolkata, on April 26, 2024. South Africa's 259/4 versus West Indies (258/5) in a T20I at Centurion on March 26, 2023 is the third highest in a successful chase in T20.

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORE IN THE IPL

Runs	Balls	Batter	For	Against	Venue	Date
175*	66	Gayle	RCB	PW	Bengaluru	23-4-2013
158*	73	McCullum	KKR	RCB	Bengaluru	18-4-2008
152*	67	Rahul	DC	PBKS	Delhi	26-4-2026
141	55	Abhishek	SRH	PBKS	Hyderabad	12-4-2025
140*	70	De Kock	LSG	KKR	Navi Mumbai	18-5-2022

SCOREBOARD

Delhi Capitals: Pathum Nissanka c Prabhsimran b Arshdeep 11, KL Rahul not out 152, Nitish Rana c Iyer b Bartlett 91, David Miller not out 3; **Extras:** (NB1, W6) **7**; **Total:** (for 2 wickets in 20 overs) **264**; **FoW:** 1-28, 2-248; **Bowling:** Arshdeep Singh 4-0-49-1, Xavier Bartlett 4-0-69-1, Marco Jansen 4-0-45-0, Vijaykumar Vyshak 3-0-48-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-42-0, Marcus Stoinis 1-0-11-0

Punjab Kings: Priyansh Arya c Rizvi b Patel 43, Prabhsimran Singh lbw b Kuldeep 76, Cooper Connolly b Kuldeep 17, Shreyas Iyer not out 71, Nehal Wadhera c sub (Nair) b Nigam 25, Shashank Singh not out 19; **Extras:** (LB1, NB1, W12) **14**; **Total:** (for 4 wickets in 18.5 overs) **265**; **FoW:** 1-126, 2-132, 3-145, 4-201; **Bowling:** Auqib Nabi 2-0-41-0, Mukesh Kumar 3-0-55-0, Axar Patel 4-0-44-1, T Natarajan 3.5-0-54-0, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-46-2, Vipraj Nigam 2-0-24-1

Result: Punjab Kings won by six wickets

LUNGI NGIDI STABLE AFTER SUFFERING NASTY HEAD INJURY

Lungi Ngidi is attended to by DC physio

New Delhi: Lungi Ngidi's evening came to a frightening, abrupt end on Saturday when the Delhi Capitals pacer was stretchered off and taken to hospital after banging the back of his head hard into the ground while attempting a catch, **reports Hindol Basu**.

Later in the day, IPL issued a statement saying: "Ngidi is stable and is due to be discharged shortly from the hospital.

The incident occurred on the third ball of the second over of Punjab's chase. Priyansh Arya attempted to loft Axar Patel over mid-off and Ngidi tracked back to complete what looked like a straightforward chance. But he misjudged the ball's trajectory, lost balance and crashed heavily onto his back with the back of his head striking the turf with force.

The DC physio and team doctor attended to him immediately. Though Ngidi appeared conscious and communicated with medical staff through hand gestures, he was unable to move his head or neck.

TIME TO ASK APOLLO AI

SMALL TARGET
Children under 5 account for over 75% of all malaria deaths in India.
Scan to protect your kids

For any Health Query Chat with Ask Apollo AI

Apollo AI: Clinical excellence for healthier India

Onus on GT attack to keep Samson in check

Neha.Surana@timesofindia.com

BA Raju

THINK TANK: CSK skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad (L) with MS Dhoni on Saturday

Chennai: Heading into the second leg of this IPL, both Chennai Super Kings and Gujarat Titans find themselves at a crossroads. And, there's plenty riding on this crucial Sunday afternoon clash at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. A win will keep their top-four hopes firmly alive, while a defeat could make things very difficult.

Having blown hot and cold so far, alarm bells are beginning to ring for both sides. With three wins each from seven outings, they are stuck in the thick of the mid-table muddle, separated only by net run rate.

Even before a ball is bowled, both captains will be eyeing the toss in the first afternoon fixture at Chepauk. With no dew factor, winning the toss could be key, as both teams are may opt to bat first in the scorching heat.

What adds another layer to this contest is a compelling face-off between CSK's bowling unit against GT's high-functioning top-order. CSK bowlers have defended totals of 207, 192 and 212 in their recent games and up against them is GT's formidable top-three: Sai Sudharsan, captain Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler, who have shouldered the bulk of the scoring.

CSK's spin duo of Noor Ahmad and Akeal Hosein has worked effectively in tandem, with the West Indian finger spinner being particularly impactful with the new ball.

With a black-soil surface expected, similar to the previous home game against Kolkata Knight Riders, the battle between GT's top-three and CSK's disciplined attack could define the outcome. The fact that the GT middle-order hasn't fired puts more pressure on Gill, Sudharsan and Buttler.

Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad has struggled for form but coach Stephen Fleming threw his weight behind his captain. "He's a young captain who's working himself into the role. I know he's getting a lot of heat from outside, but within he's got a lot of support and he's very well respected within the side, and that will continue."

Mystery over Dhoni continues

Former captain MS Dhoni, meanwhile, trained hard again, as he has been doing for sometime now. He is coming back from a calf strain and even though there is a lot of anticipation about his return on Sunday, coach Fleming didn't give any assurance.

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
PBKS	7	6	0	1	1.333	13
RCB	7	5	2	0	1.101	10
SRH	8	5	3	0	0.815	10
RR	8	5	3	0	0.602	10
CSK	7	3	4	0	0.118	6
DC	7	3	4	0	-0.184	6
GT	7	3	4	0	-0.790	6
MI	7	2	5	0	-0.736	4
LSG	7	2	5	0	-1.277	4
KKR	7	1	5	1	-0.879	3

Batting blues put LSG on survival watch against KKR

Winless At Home & On A 4-Match Slide, Pant & Co Face A KKR Outfit Lifted By Spin-Driven First Victory

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: Lucknow Super Giants' season is now less about promise and more about problem solving. Four straight defeats have pushed Rishabh Pant's side to ninth place, with their batting wobbles and inability to turn Ekana into an advantage becoming the two biggest threats to their playoff hopes. Sunday's return to Lucknow against Kolkata Knight Riders, themselves bottom of the table, is therefore more than another league fixture. It is a survival test for two sides short on points and confidence, but with contrasting areas of concern. LSG need runs and clarity. KKR need to prove their first win was not a one-off.

Lucknow's slide has been sharp. Their top order has not given them the Powerplay lift a T20 chase or first-innings launch demands, while the middle-order has too often been left to repair innings rather than build them. The home record has deepened the unease, with LSG yet to win at Ekana this season after three defeats in Lucknow.

KKR, in contrast, travel with a small but significant lift after beating Rajasthan Royals for their first win of the campaign. That result was built around their spinners and lower middle-order and it has given them a template against an LSG batting unit still searching for fluency. Varun Chakaravarthy and Sunil Narine's control could become central if the surface offers even modest grip.

The pitch was under close watch on Saturday. A black-soil surface was rolled even as LSG global cricket director Tom Moody, head coach Justin Langer and Pant inspected the strip. The captain even felt the surface by hand. Early indications suggested a better batting surface, which would put the Powerplay — where both teams have had issues — under sharper scrutiny. LSG spin-bowling coach Carl Crowe said the side had to adapt better rather than get trapped in over-analysis. "There's only so much you can do in terms of preparation and planning because who knows what the conditions are going to be like," he said, adding, "Adapting is key."

SRH make short work of tall chase

Sooryavanshi's 36-Ball Century In Vain As Abhishek, Ishan Guide Sunrisers To Victory

Mandakini.Shalya @timesofindia.com

Jaipur: Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan are among the most destructive forces in the IPL at the moment. On Saturday, they made a mockery of a daunting 229-run target, dismantling Rajasthan Royals' bowling attack with a blistering 132-run partnership off just 55 balls to help Sunrisers Hyderabad register a five-wicket win with nine balls remaining.

In a display of synchronised destruction, Abhishek (57 off 29) and Ishan (74 off 31) both brought up their fifties in 24 balls and with it, the pair spoiled Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's party. Earlier in the evening, the 15-year-old had stunned the crowd with a magnificent 103 off 37 balls.

36 Balls **Vaibhav Sooryavanshi** took to bring up his hundred. It is 15-year-old's second quickest in the IPL. He had taken 35 balls for his first century against Gujarat Titans at Jaipur on April 28, 2025. He is the first player to reach two IPL tons in less than 37 balls.

The chase was not without its moments of fortune. Abhishek enjoyed two massive reprieves in consecutive overs — first in the fourth over, when Shimron Hetmyer misjudged a flat chance at third man and then in the fifth when Ravindra Jadeja uncharacteristically put down a sitter at backward point.

Donovan Ferreira eventually broke the in the 10th over, bowling a full one that Abhishek lofted towards long-off, where Jofra Archer took a fine overhead catch.

But with SRH at 139/2, the dismissal did little to disrupt their momentum. In the 13th over, Ferreira dived forward to take a sharp catch off Archer, removing Ishan and leaving SRH 166/3. Heinrich Klaasen (29 off 24) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (36 off 18) then kept the chase firmly on track to steer SRH to victory.

Earlier, Sooryavanshi gave Royals a blistering start as he brought up his second IPL hundred in 36 balls, studded with 12 sixes and five fours. During the blitz, he shared a 112-run stand off 62 balls with Dhruv Jurel (51 off 35). Sooryavanshi was dismissed the very next delivery after reaching his milestone, missing an attempted scoop and being trapped lbw.

AFP

POWER PACKED: Ishan Kishan's 31-ball 74 set up SRH's chase

Royals were still well placed at 170/3 in 13.5 overs, but the momentum stalled after the teenager's departure. On this surface, 228/6 proved short. Pat Cummins was the standout exception on a day dominated by bat, finishing with 4-0-27-1. Back after a long injury layoff, the SRH captain showed his class by remaining the most economical bowler on a surface that offered little sanctuary.

Brief Scores: Rajasthan Royals 228/6 (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 103, Dhruv Jurel 51, Donovan Ferreira 33; Eshan Malinga 2/38) lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad (Ishan Kishan 74, Abhishek Sharma 57, Nitish Kumar Reddy 36; Jofra Archer 2/34, Brijesh Sharma 2/44) by five wickets.

Padikkal attributes steady growth to state captaincy

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Bengaluru: Devdutt Padikkal's rise in the ongoing IPL season has been marked not just by runs, but by a growing sense of awareness — of situations, of bowlers, and of his game. After his defining 27-ball 55 in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's five-wicket win over Gujarat Titans on Friday at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here, the southpaw pointed to a significant factor behind his growth — captaining Karnataka.

"Being a captain has definitely given me a different perspective on the game," Padikkal said during the post-match press conference. "It's made me think a lot more about how a bowler thinks, how captains are thinking on the field, what they might look to do," he added.

That shift was evident in the way he constructed his innings alongside Virat Kohli. Walking in early in a steep chase, Padikkal showed intent, picking his moments to attack while ensuring RCB stayed ahead of the required rate.

Padikkal believes that added responsibility has sharpened his decision-making. "It gives me a little more understanding as to the situation that I'm in and how I need to respond," he said, adding that the leadership role has helped him refine different aspects of his game. The result has been a more complete T20 batter.

His progress, however, has not come overnight. Padikkal was quick to dismiss the narrative of sudden transformation, instead framing his journey as a work in progress. "The conversations around me being different have been going on for far too long. This is who I am now," he said. "You find things you need to work on and you keep improving."

He acknowledged that there are technical differences between formats, particularly when switching from red-ball to white-ball cricket. "If you compare my Ranji Trophy batting to here, you can clearly see the changes," he added. But the foundation, he stressed, remains unchanged: "The self-belief and confidence need to stay the same." The 25-year-old also highlighted the influence of sharing a dressing room with Kohli.

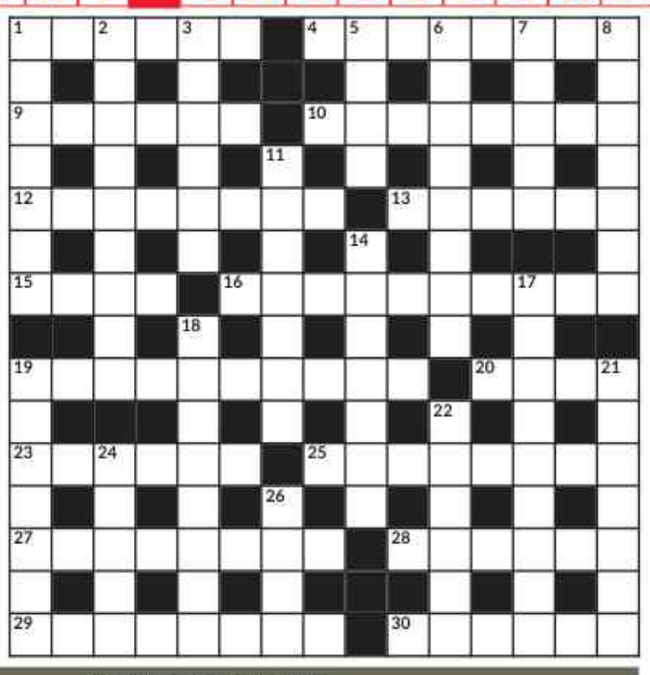
For a young batter navigating his own path, observing one of the game's greats has been instructive. "The biggest thing for me is his energy and intensity," Padikkal said. "Even after achieving everything, he still gives 100 per cent in every session. That kind of commitment is very hard to find."

More than anything, it's the relentless drive that has left an impression. "When you see someone so passionate, it rubs off on everyone," added Padikkal. Meanwhile, GT assistant coach Vijay Dahiya revealed Kohli was disappointed to have not reached a hundred despite his match-winning 8. "After the game, he (Kohli) was saying he could've converted it into a hundred. That tells you about his mindset. He is not playing to prove a point to anyone. It's about the man in the mirror - trying to be better than yesterday," said Dahiya.

THE TOI CROSSWORD

CROSSWORD No. TCC#0269

The **TOI Crossword contest** is on a short break, but the crossword itself will continue to be featured in The Sunday Times of India, so that you can continue to relish the challenge every week. **Stay tuned!**



The Times of India CROSSWORD EVERY SUNDAY

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across
1 Worthless friend put to the test (6)
4 Intrude by chance or mistake (8)
9 Distant meteor destroyed (6)
10 Plucky airman of a bygone age? (8)
12 No energy? And no inclination apparently (8)
13 Seize a king before all others (6)
15 Yes, truly an aspiration (4)
16 He goes ahead to walk the dog (10)
19 Not having a steady position as croupier perhaps (10)
20 Fill gap with promotion (4)
23 Saving for growth (6)
25 Plates used for eating (8)
27 Setting great store by a spot of publicity (8)
28 We hear an officer is at the heart of things (6)
29 Agency typist unpunctual - that's the pattern (8)
30 Wooden-faced beauty (6)

Down
1 Talk about a point raised by a nurseryman (7)
2 It cuts down the light coming from headlamps (9)
3 It's used by children to disconcert people (6)
5 To expose a lie it needs hammering home (4)
6 Booked for being uncommunicative (8)
7 Unusually eager to give consent (5)
8 From which to make the draw (7)
11 Continental act is A1 in variety (7)
14 Think things over in bed when perplexed (7)
17 Permissive play? (9)
18 Five hundred wrongly laid off - it's a bloomer (8)
19 Saucepan's ready for cooking a snipe (3,4)
21 Tell-tale governor (7)
22 The inane goddess? (6)
24 State the true figure (5)
26 Speed of a ship steaming to tie up (4)

QUICK CLUES

Across
1 Of superior quality (6) 4 Something completely useless (4,4) 9 Long boring list (6) 10 In original condition (8) 12 Force of personality (8) 13 Artificial underground passage (6) 15 Iridescent gemstone (4) 16 Find after long search (3,2,5) 19 Occupation, profession (4,2,4) 20 Humiliating rebuff (4) 23 Expenditure (6) 25 An outlaw (8) 27 Unquestioning (8) 28 Adorn (6) 29 Small ingenious devices (8) 30 Horse's fastest pace (6)

Down
1 Caribbean music genre (7) 2 Without delay, as payment (2,3,4) 3 Large marine eel (6) 5 Deserve (4) 6 Uneasiness (8) 7 Bulbous vegetable (5) 8 Secrecy (7) 11 A moral doubt (7) 14 Suppressed (7) 17 Sound familiar (4,1,4) 18 Genuine (4,4) 19 West central US state (7) 21 End of a relationship (5-2) 22 Swiss city and lake (6) 24 Unenthusiastic (5) 26 Landing stage (4)

SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC

R	I	O	T	O	U	S	■	F	I	D	D	L	E	R
I	■	R	■	V	■	P	■	R	■	R	■	A	■	E
P	R	E	C	E	D	E	■	E	R	A	S	M	U	S
P	■	G	■	R	■	A	■	I	■	W	■	B	■	I
I	N	A	P	T	■	R	E	G	I	S	T	E	R	S
N	■	N	■	O	■	■	■	H	■	■	■	N	■	T
G	O	O	D	N	I	G	H	T	■	H	A	T	E	S
■	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	E	■	■	■	■	■	■
S	H	O	E	S	■	T	A	R	P	A	U	L	I	N
E	■	P	■	■	■	T	■	■	■	D	■	E	■	O
A	T	T	E	N	T	I	O	N	■	L	O	C	U	M
T	■	I	■	O	■	N	■	E	■	I	■	T	■	A
T	O	O	L	I	N	G	■	E	G	G	H	E	A	D
L	■	N	■	S	■	O	■	D	■	H	■	R	■	I
E	A	S	T	E	R	N	■	S	A	T	A	N	I	C

QUICK

C	A	B	B	A	G	E	■	B	R	A	M	B	L	E
O	■	U	■	R	■	J	■	Y	■	D	■	E	■	N
M	I	R	A	C	L	E	■	D	R	O	U	G	H	T
P	■	N	■	H	■	C	■	E	■	P	■	O	■	I
A	B	I	D	E	■	T	I	G	H	T	K	N	I	T
S	■	N	■	N	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	I	■	L
S	E	G	R	E	G	A	T	E	■	C	R	A	Z	E
■	■	■	■	M	■	R	■	E	■	O	■	■	■	■
E	N	V	O	Y	■	M	A	S	S	M	E	D	I	A
X	■	E	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	N
H	A	R	D	T	I	M	E	S	■	A	R	S	O	N
I	■	D	■	O	■	E	■	N	■	N	■	E	■	O
B	L	A	C	K	E	N	■	O	R	D	E	R	L	Y
I	■	N	■	E	■	T	■	O	■	G	■	V	■	E
T	E	T	A	N	U	S	■	P	R	O	C	E	E	D

SNAP SHOTS

Gurbax Grewal no more

Olympic hockey medallist Gurbax Singh Grewal has died following a heart attack in Zirakpur near in Chandigarh. He was 84. Grewal, who was part of the Indian team that secured a bronze medal at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, died on Friday.

Vanshika & Chirag win gold: Vanshika Chaudhary and Chirag Sharma won the 10m air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Cairo on Saturday, taking India's gold tally to five. India continued to lead the medal table with five gold, five silver and four bronze. The duo shot 484.3 to shrug off the challenge of Aliaksandra Piatrova and Mikita Daubash (467.6). The second Indian pair of Mohini Singh and Himanshu Rana tallied 407.4 to clinch bronze.

Abhay loses to Gawad: India's Abhay Singh lost to Egyptian former world No. 1 and world champion Karim Gawad in a thriller in the men's quarterfinals of the Grasshopper Cup squash, a PSA Gold-level event, in Zurich. The Egyptian second seed clinched the contest 12-10 11-9.

Diksha slips to tied 16th: Indian golfer Diksha Dagar gave away two vital shots towards the end and dropped to tied-16th at the end of the second round at the Investec SA Women's Open in Cape Town. She shot 1-under 72 and was now 6-under for 36 holes. Pranavi Urs (73) was placed T-43rd while Avani Prashanth (71) just made the weekend with a late birdie on the seventh, her 16th hole to squeeze inside the cutline.

Furyk named US captain: Jim Furyk, a 17-times winner on the PGA Tour, was named on Friday as the US team captain for the 2027 Ryder Cup at Adare Manor in Limerick, Ireland after Tiger Woods declined the role following his arrest on a driving under the influence charge. Furyk, who was the losing Ryder Cup captain at Paris in 2018, succeeds Keegan Bradley in the role.

Mbappe suffers hamstring issue: Real Madrid striker Kylian Mbappe suffered a "muscle overload" in his left hamstring during the team's 1-1 draw at Real Betis in La Liga, a club source told AFP on Friday. Mbappe asked to be substituted in the final 10 minutes of the game. "I have no idea (how Mbappe is), he had some discomfort and we will see how it develops in the coming days," said coach Alvaro Arbeloa.

Ramsey takes on marathon challenge: Welsh football great Aaron Ramsey hung up his boots earlier this month but that did not mean easing up as on Sunday he will don his running shoes and compete in the London Marathon -- for a charitable cause.

Lakers rally for OT win: LeBron James and Marcus Smart recorded double-doubles as the Los Angeles Lakers took a stranglehold on their first-round playoff series against the host Houston Rockets with a 112-108 overtime win in Game 3 on Friday.
Results: Boston 108 bt Philadelphia 100; LA Lakers 112 bt Houston 108 (OT); San Antonio 120 bt Portland 108.

RUN READY: International athletes train near Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru, ahead of the TCS 10K

Chelangat, Kwizera look to raise the bar

Early Start May Help Runners Beat The Heat In The Elite Showdown

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Bengaluru: Nearly 18 years after the World 10K first brought thousands of runners onto the city's roads, the TCS World 10K Bengaluru has set new benchmarks in competition, charity and sustainability. The 2026 edition underlines the growing stature of the World Athletics Gold Label meet, with some of the world's best distance runners eyeing the top spot on the podium and the winner's prize cheque of $260,000.

In the women's race, defending champion Sarah Chelangat may benefit from the cooler conditions created by the early 5.30 am start, but retaining her title is unlikely to be straightforward on Sunday.

"This year's field is much stronger than last year and it may not be easy for Sarah to defend her title," a foreign expert, who did not wish to be identified, told TOI on the eve of the race.

That shifts the focus to Kenya's 21-year-old Brenda Jepchirchir, winner of the Valencia Marathon in January and the second-fastest woman this year with a time of 29:25. Close behind her are Ethiopia's Chaltu Dida (PB 29:50) and Rwanda's Florence Niyonkuru, who will make her 10K debut here and could emerge as the dark horse.

WORLD 10K

The women's course record belongs to Kenya's Irene Cheptai, who clocked 30:35 in 2022. Pacer Tigist Tesema will look to help the leading contenders push past that four-year-old mark.

BROTHER-SISTER DOUBLE ON THE CARDS?

If Chaltu wins the women's title, her brother Gemechu Dida will hope to take home the men's crown when the elite men's race begins at 6.08 am. The 25-year-old, who won the Guadalajara Half Marathon in Mexico earlier this year, has a personal best of 26:54, set in Germany last year.

The top 10 contenders:
Men: 1. Harbert Kibet (Uganda), 2. Gemechu Dida (Ethiopia), 3. Rodrigue Kwizera (Burundi), 4. Tadese Worku (Ethiopia), 5. Vincent Kipkorir (Kenya), 6. Saymon Amanuel (Eritrea), 7. Victor Kipruto (Kenya), 8. Vincent Kimaiyo (Kenya), 9. Yisma Dillu (Ethiopia), 10. Muktar Edris (Ethiopia)
Women: 1. Brenda Jepchirchir (Kenya), 2. Clare Chemtai (Kenya), 3. Chaltu Dida (Ethiopia), 4. Wede Kefale (Ethiopia), 5. Janeth Chepngetich (Kenya), 6. Fentaye Belayneh (Ethiopia), 7. Sarah Chelangat (Uganda), 8. Maryam Lufti (Kenya), 8. Veronica Loleo (Kenya), 9. Rebecca Chelangat (Uganda), 10. Esther Chebet (Uganda).

"I'm working hard and I'm in a good team. There are Rodrigue (Kwizera) and Tamirat (Tola), the Olympic marathon champion, in the team. I work with them very hard and that's how I improved my speed," he said through a translator.

Besides Chaltu, Gemechu has four sisters and six brothers.

Leading the men's contenders is Burundi's Rodrigue Kwizera, who narrowly missed the title here in 2023. Kwizera and Sebastian Sawe, the current world No. 1 in marathon, both clocked 27:58, but the Burundian lost out in a photo finish by just 0.11 seconds.

"My body is in good shape and if the weather is not too hot, I expect to run a good race," said Kwizera, whose personal best of 26:54 is quicker than Kenyan Nicolas Kipkorir's course record of 27:38, also set in 2022.

Also in contention is 20-year-old Ugandan Harbert Kibet, who has recorded this year's fastest time of 26:39 in Spain.

Sanjivani and Pal chase repeat glory

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Syed Asif

HOME HOPES: (From left) Ujala, Harmanjot, Kartik, Abhishek and Sanjivani on Saturday

Bengaluru: Sanjivani Jadhav first won the Indian women's title at the TCS World 10K in 2018. Since then, she has added two more titles in the last two editions, and on Sunday, the two-time defending champion will look to complete a hat-trick.

Parul Chaudhary won the title in 2019 and 2022, but if Sanjivani finishes on top again, she will become the first Indian woman to complete a hat-trick on the Bengaluru roads. Her winning time of 33:38 in 2018 still stands as the course record.

INDIAN ANGLE

"It is more motivation than pressure to go for the hat-trick," Sanjivani told reporters here on Saturday. The Maharashtra athlete, who also won the Indian women's title on her marathon debut in Mumbai, said she is determined to retain her crown.

PAL VS KARKERA

In the men's section, Indian course record holder Abhishek Pal is also back to defend his title.

The 28-year-old, who recently returned from a high-altitude training stint in Kenya, said he is looking forward to another memorable race. "I'm happy to begin my season with this race in Bengaluru. This will give me feedback on whether I should focus on speed or endurance as I shift my focus to the track ahead of the Asian Games," Pal said.

"Last year, I kept pace with the foreign athletes, and it helped me create a new record," he added, hinting at a similar strategy this time. Looking to challenge Pal will be Dr Kartik Karkera and Harmanjot Singh.

Karkera, an orthopaedic surgeon, is targeting the national marathon record at the Asian Games. "This race is part of my off-season preparation as I build towards the Asiad, where I will try to break the national record in the marathon. Sawan (Barwal) proved that it is possible, and I'm sure the national record will be broken again this year," Karkera said.

"It will be a fast race on Sunday, and I will aim to break the 29-minute mark in India, which could be tough given the conditions," he added.

The men's course record belongs to Pal, who clocked 29:12 last year.

SIDELIGHTS

VIPs, business leaders lace up
Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Mysuru MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar and Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya are among the prominent politicians expected to take to the start line on Sunday.

Course measurement meet
The Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS), in collaboration with World Athletics, also concluded a five-day course measurement workshop in Bengaluru on the sidelines of the event. The initiative, led by AIMS secretary Hugh Jones, brought together 14 participants from across the country, all associated with nearly 90 races that collectively cover more than half a million runners. The participants represented events stretching from Ladakh to Kochi and from Ahmedabad to Tawang, underlining the national footprint of road running in India. TNN

Mumbai frustrate hosts BFC

Munoz's Men Dominate Possession But Fail To Break Through In Goalless Draw

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Syed Asif

LAST-DITCH EFFORT: BFC's Rahul Bheke (third right) failed to direct the ball towards the goal in the closing stages of the match

Bengaluru: In their final home game of the ISL season, Bengaluru FC dominated possession against Mumbai City FC at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Saturday, but a goalless draw left the Blues frustrated after they failed to convert their chances.

It was a similar story for the visitors, who also created openings but lacked the finishing touch in front of goal.

The stalemate notwithstanding, the home side acknowledged the 14,723 Blues faithful in attendance. The expressions on several players' faces reflected the disappointment of dropping points in a crunch fixture.

ISL

With both teams sharing a point, BFC moved up to fourth place with 16 points, while Mumbai (19) remained third behind leaders Mohun Bagan Super Giant (20) and FC Goa (19). Both teams have three matches left before the season concludes next month.

The hosts started brightly, with Sirojiddin's long-ranger missing the target in just the second minute. Mumbai threatened midway through the first half, and one early chance fell to Akash Mishra, whose side-footed shot was palmed away to safety by goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

BFC enjoyed greater possession in the final 15 minutes of the first half, while the Islanders looked dangerous on the counterattack. Their use of the left flank through Naorem Roshan and Ashique Kuruniyan posed a constant threat.

One such cross found BFC talisman Sunil Chhetri, whose improvised backheel effort failed to hit the target.

Just four minutes into the second half, Mumbai received a golden chance to take the lead when Lallianzuala Chhangte found himself one-on-one with Sandhu. The forward dribbled past the goalkeeper but could only find the side netting. As the evening temperature dipped, both teams raised the tempo. Kuruniyan produced a moment of brilliance, weaving past four defenders, but his eventual effort failed to trouble Mumbai goalkeeper Phurba Lachenpa.

Pep Munoz's men dominated proceedings and looked the likelier side to break the deadlock. Chhetri and Braian Sanchez combined well to drive the attack, and the confidence spread to the rest of the side. Substitute Soham Varshneya, who replaced Ryan Williams in the 61st minute, nearly made an immediate impact, but his close-range effort was blocked by Mumbai defenders.

Against the run of play, Mumbai got another chance to land the decisive blow after BFC failed to clear the ball. It fell to Vikram Singh, but the forward blasted his shot over the bar in the 82nd minute.

Urged on by the home crowd, BFC pushed forward late in the game. They came close from a set-piece when Sirojiddin's delivery narrowly missed a leaping Rahul Bheke in the melee before Lachenpa tipped the ball over for a corner in the closing stages.

BWF approves 3x15 scoring system

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Hyderabad: Badminton is set for a new avatar as the annual general body of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) has approved the 3x15 point scoring system from Jan next.

The proposal received more than two-thirds majority at the BWF AGM in Horsens, Denmark on Saturday. While 198 voted in favour of the new format, 43 voted against.

BADMINTON

PV Sindhu said change should be meaningful. "We should always look to improve sport for players, fans, broadcasters and commercial partners. But not every change is progress. So, my feeling would be like, let us innovate, but let us make sure we are solving the right problem," Sindhu told the BWF website.

Doubles specialist Satwisairaj Rankireddy told **TOI** that 15-point system will suit their style. "For our playing style, the 15-point system will be advantageous. But I like the 21-point game. We play real badminton there. It is like comparing Test and T20 cricket. Test cricket is what we love," Satwik said. BWF started experimenting with the 3x15 format from May 2025 at the Mexican international challenge. BWF have also tested the existing 21x3 against 15x3 and 11x5. The factors assessed include winning probability, match duration, game closeness, number of high-pressure or exciting points. All data indicated that the 3x15 format consistently outperformed the other two formats.

The 3x21 system was introduced in 2006. Between 2002 and 2006, the 5x7 system was implemented and scrapped due to extended matches. Before 2002, it was best of three games of 15 points each for men and 11 points each for women. At the 2004 Olympics 15x3 was used. Before 2006 there was the service-over system, where players secured points only while serving. In the new system, players get points for every rally they win.

Former National coach U Vim-al Kumar is also against the new system. "Altering the existing scoring system risks diluting the core essence of badminton — its physical toughness, tactical depth, and mental resilience," Vimal wrote to the BWF.

GUPTA, RANJANA BETTER RECORDS

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Tumakuru: Nitin Gupta, Ranjana Yadav, and Mohammed Ashfaq made headlines by breaking national records on Day 2 of the National Junior (U-20) Athletics Federation competition here on Saturday. Uttar Pradesh's Gupta clinched gold in the 5,000m race walk, clocking 18:54.37 to surpass his own previous record of 19:24.48, set in Patna last year. Madhya Pradesh's Ranjana set a new mark in the women's 5,000m race walk, winning gold in 23:22.12 and eclipsing the earlier record of 23:43.58 set by Manisha last year in Bhubaneswar. Kerala's Mohammed Ashfaq broke the men's 400m record, en route to clinching gold with a time of 46.05s, bettering Amoj Jacob's 2017 mark of 46.26 seconds.

ATHLETICS

Meanwhile, Karnataka's Nupura Holla secured bronze in the women's 100m hurdles, finishing third with a time of 14.22 seconds.

Select results (only winners): Men: 5000m Race Walk: Nitin Gupta (Uttar Pradesh, 18:54.37, NJR); **Hammer Throw:** Ashuvendra Pratap (Uttar Pradesh, 67.87m); **100m hurdles:** Kiran K (Kerala, 13.75); **400m:** Mohammed Ashfaq (Kerala, 46.05, NJR). **Women: 5000m Race Walk:** Ranjana Yadav (Madhya Pradesh, 23:22.12s, NJR); **Shot put:** Anupriya V S (Kerala, 14.35m); **100m hurdles:** Yamini Karthikeyan (Tamil Nadu, 13.79s); **400m**: Neeru Pathak (NCOE Trivandrum, 54.31).

Kothari, Advani win

Reigning champion Sourav Kothari survived a scare in his opening match of the IBSF World Billiards Championship that got underway in Carlow, Ireland on Saturday. The Indian overcame South Korea's Hwang Chulho 305-238 after being down by over 120-odd points with about 30 minutes to go. Former champion Pankaj Advani's runaway 1003-54 win over Michael Crook of Isle of Man was the highlight of the day. Advani floored his rival with a barrage of breaks, runs of 198, 297 and 117 flowed from his cue. **Results (Indians unless mentioned): Group A:** Sourav Kothari 305 (73, 111) bt Hwang Chulho (Kor) 238 (51, 57); Martin Goodwill (Eng) bt Akhilesh Mohan (Fra) 322-174; **Group B:** Pankaj Advani 1003 (198, 297, 117) bt Michael Crook (IOM) 54; **Group C:** Dhruv Sitwala 645 (286, 101, 101) bt Carl-Walter Steiner (Aut) 115; Alok Kumar 502 (112) bt Aonghus McAnally (Ire) 202; **Group D:** Rafath Habib 365 (67) bt Subrat Das 219; **Group E:** Rupesh Shah 311 (123, 82) bt Rishabh Thakkar 170 (89); **Group F:** Shrikrishna S 609 (99, 69, 83, 118) bt Jagadesh Bhuvaneswaran 87. TNN

WORLD BILLIARDS

Barca close in on title

Reuters

ON TARGET: Andy Robertson

Getafe: Barcelona continued their march towards the La Liga title with a 2-0 victory at Getafe on Saturday, as goals from Fermin Lopez and Marcus Rashford secured them a ninth consecutive league win. The result moved Barcelona to 85 points, 11 ahead of second-placed Real Madrid with five rounds remaining, following Real's 1-1 draw at Real Betis on Friday. Getafe are sixth with 44 points.

LIVERPOOL PREVAIL

Liverpool moved ever closer to securing Champions League football next season with a 3-1 win over Crystal Palace on Saturday but will be hoping Mohamed Salah has not played his final game for the club. Salah limped off in the second half at Anfield holding his hamstring with less than a month of his glittering career with the Reds remaining.

Two goals in five minutes just before half-time tightened the grip of Arne Slot's men on a top-five finish. British transfer record signing Alexander Isak scored his first goal since returning from a leg break as he turned home on the rebound after Alexis MacAllister's initial effort was blocked.

Results: Spanish league: Alaves 2 (Martinez 56, 69) bt Mallorca 1 (Virgili 18); Getafe 0 lost to Barcelona 2 (Lopez 45+1, Rashford 74). **EPL:** Fulham 1 (Sessegnon 43) bt Aston Villa 0; Liverpool 3 (Isak 35, Robertson 40, Wirtz 90+6) bt Crystal Palace 1 (Munoz 71); West Ham 2 (Soucek 51, Wilson 90+2) bt Everton 1 (Dewsbury-Hall 88); Wolves 0 lost to Tottenham 1 (Palhinha 82). AGENCIES

Swiatek withdraws

Iga Swiatek was forced to retire from her Madrid Open clash with Ann Li on Saturday due to a viral illness, sending the American in the round of 16 of the WTA 1000 tournament. Swiatek rebounded from a one-set deficit to level the contest but put an end to the tie in the decider.

Ninth-seeded Russian Mirra Andreeva overcame Dalma Galfi 6-3, 6-2. In ATP action, Casper Ruud raced into the third round with a 6-0, 6-1 win of Jaume Munar. Alexander Zverev clinched a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Mariano Navone. AFP

Mysuru, Vanguards have it easy

Bengaluru: Mysuru A eased past Hebbal 66-9 in the boys category at the State sub junior (U-13) championship for the BS Narayan memorial trophy here on Saturday. Kushal top-scored for Mysuru with 14 points. In the girls' event, Bangalore Vanguards defeated.

Results: League stage: Boys: MCHS 50 (Avanish 13, Divit 13) bt Bangalore Sporting 45 (Aryan 16, Jeshwan 13) HT: 26-12; Mysuru 'A' 66 (Kushal 14) bt Hebbal 9 (Pranav 2) HT: 39-06; YNBC 70 (Svar Nagarjuna 15) bt Southern Blues 13 (Reyansh 6) HT: 37-7; Beagles BC 67 (Dishanth 8, Nikil 8) bt Koramangala 48 (Takshin 23) HT: 22-21; Young Orions 50 (Avyukth 18) bt Mandya 34 ((Ishtartha 16) HT: 31-13; Rajmahal BC 31 (Tanush 10) bt Orions BC 25 (Vithin 11) HT: 12-12; Mounts BC 50 (Thimmaiah 17) bt Nettakallappa 17 (Lishanth 7) HT: 11-10; Bharath SU 67 (Amit 23, Hitesh 15) bt Pattabhi BC 26 (Druvik 5) HT: 41-14; Hassan 29 (Manjunath 10) bt Davanagere 28 (Yash 11) HT: 7-14; Dharwad A 42 (Nagaraj 12) bt Chamarajanagar 10 (Samrudh 4) HT: 19-5; Kalaburgi 18 (Yadunandhan 10) bt Dharwad 4 HT: 18-4; Davanagere 26 (Prathamshi 8) bt Shivamogga 14 (Shree Arya 8) HT: 20-8; Lakshyan 10 bt Ramanagar 9 HT: 4-5; Bangalore Vanguards 63 (Neil 16, Chayank 14, Takshak 11) bt HBR BC 38 HT: 39-26; MNK Rao 40 (Utkarsh 14) bt Hoskote BC 13 (Ayush 5) HT: 24-2. **Girls:** MCHS 52 (Kanira 12; Swarali 10) bt YNBC 8 (Bhavyashri 5) HT: 29-8; Mandya 43 (Tejaseini 10) bt DRDO 7 (Akanksha 4) HT: 28-3, Beagles BC 57 (Ayra 23 Lochama 13) bt MNK Rao 14 (Shreshta 4) HT: 28-11; Mounts BC 61 (Kenisha 14) bt Devanga 18 (Yuktha 13) HT: 32-11; Young Orions 31 (Anushka 13) bt Southern Blues 7 HT: 22-1; Viveks SC 59 (Pahal 12) bt Hoskote BC 13 (Manasvini 10) HT: 30-5; Halasuru 20 (Kashvi 9) bt Ramanagar 10 (Tanu 8) HT: 11-04; Mysuru A 38 (Kushi 9) bt Chamarajanagar 4 HT: 17-4, Dharwad A 16 (Aaradhya 5) bt Kolar 13 (Poojitha 4) HT: 6-5, Mysuru B 31 (Bindushree 9) bt Kolar 6 (Sanvi 6) HT: 18-2; PPC 34 (Aniksha 8) bt Appaiah 7 HT: 26-7; Bangalore Vanguards 47 (Aarushi 11) bt Pattabhi 2 HT: 31-1. TNN

BASKETBALL

Baig, Bhullar share stage

Moushumi.Bora@timesofindia.com

Singapore: This is a golfer's story. Similar tales have unfolded on the Indian greens. This one comes from across the border, from Pakistan.

"My name is **Ahmad Baig** and I am from Lahore. This week I am playing at the International Series Singapore," was his humble introduction.

GOLF

For the moment, he shares the sta-ge with Gaganjeet Bhullar at 6-under and tied-5th place at the Sentosa Golf Club's famed Serapong course, and wi-ll be stepping out together in the same group under the Sunday morning sun. The Indian, a winner 11 times on the Asian Tour, scored a 1-over on Saturday. Korean Jeongwoo Ham seemed unperturbed by the heat as he stretched his lead to 4 strokes at 13-under.

Back to Baig. With his best friend Salman on the bag, Ahmad clocked one of the day's four eagles for a 4-under 67.

It can be lonely on the Tour as he is the only Pakistani around but he has found his group of Indian friends in Bhullar, Pukhraj Gill, Yuvraj Singh, Karandeep Kochhar and Ajeetesh Sandhu. "I meet them every week when we are playing together."

It was SSP Chawrasia who urged him to attempt for a card in Europe.

Leading scores (3rd round): -13 Jeongwoo Ham (Kor) 64-68-68; **-9** Cameron John (Aus) 70-67-67; **-8** Tomohiro Ishizaka (Jap) 67-68-70; **-7** Julien Sale (Fra) 70-67-69; **-6** Ahmad Baig (Pak) 69-71-67, Gaganjeet Bhullar (Ind) 67-68-72, Jazz Janewattananond (Tha) 68-66-73. **Other Indians:** Pukhraj Singh Gill (T45), Karandeep Kochhar (T67).
(The writer is in Singapore at the invitation of International Series)

Guru HC clinch title

Bengaluru: Guru Hockey Club clinched the KSHA 'A' division hockey league championship here on Saturday. In the final, they blanked Blue Star Hockey Club 3-0. The Blue Star players made good interceptions to stop the Guru players, but they maintained their constant attack. Guru HC broke into the lead in the 14th minute, with Venkatesh sounding the boards. Sandeep doubled the lead in the 26th minute.
Guru HC players dominated the proceedings with precise passing and controlled the tempo, which prevented the Blue Star team from making a comeback. Aravind rounded off the tally in the 49th minute.
In the third-place match, Bombers Hockey Club edged past Bangalore United Hockey Club via penalty corners. At regulation time, the teams were locked at 1-all.

HOCKEY

Results: Final: Guru HC: 3 (Venkatesh T 14, Sandeep S 26, Aravind 49) bt Blue Star HC: 0. **Third-place match:** Bombers HC: 3 (Md Naeem, Manoj, Ganapathi, BJ) bt Bangalore United HC: (Ajith Kumar, Muthu Kumar). **Individual awards: Best goalkeeper:** Sai Kumar (Guru HC). **Best defender:** Karthick (Guru HC), **Best midfielder**: Muthu Kumar (Bangalore United HC), **Best attacker**: Karthick (Blue Star HC). **Player of the tournament**: Md Naeem (Bombers HC). TNN

HARSHAD, TANYA CROWNED CHAMPIONS

Bengaluru: Harshad Shadish and Tanya Hemanth were crowned the men's and women's champions in the state ranking senior and junior badminton tournament in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Results: (from Bengaluru Urban, unless specified): Finals: Men: Singles: Harshad Shadish bt Rudra Shahi (Mysuru) 21-16, 21-15; **Doubles:** Raghu Mariswamy/Rohith M bt Ashith Surya/Vaibhaav 21-16, 21-15. **Women: Singles:** Tanya Hemanth bt Hithaishree L Rajaiah (Bengaluru Rural) 21-10, 21-11; **Doubles:** Ashwini Bhat K/Shikha Gautam bt Amrutha Pramuthesh/Rashmi Ganesh 21-13, 27-29, 21-16. **Mixed doubles**: Kishal Ganapathy/Neysa Cariappa bt Ganesh Vittalji/Jahnavi Shetty 21-12, 21-10. **U-19: Boys: Singles:** Kaushik Reddy bt Harshad Shadish 21-13, 21-19; Doubles: Amith Raj Natraj/K Yadunandan bt Nischal S/Yeshas M Reddy 21-19, 21-7. **Girls: Singles:** Disha Santosh bt Hithaishree L Rajaiah (Bengaluru Rural) 21-18, 21-6; **Doubles:** Nidhi Atmaram/Selvasamruddhi Selvaprabhu bt Sameeksha Hn and Tanika Mohan 25-23, 21-17. **Mixed doubles:** Amith Raj Natraj/Suhina Roy bt Eswar Sai Katam/Deborah John 21-16, 21-14. TNN

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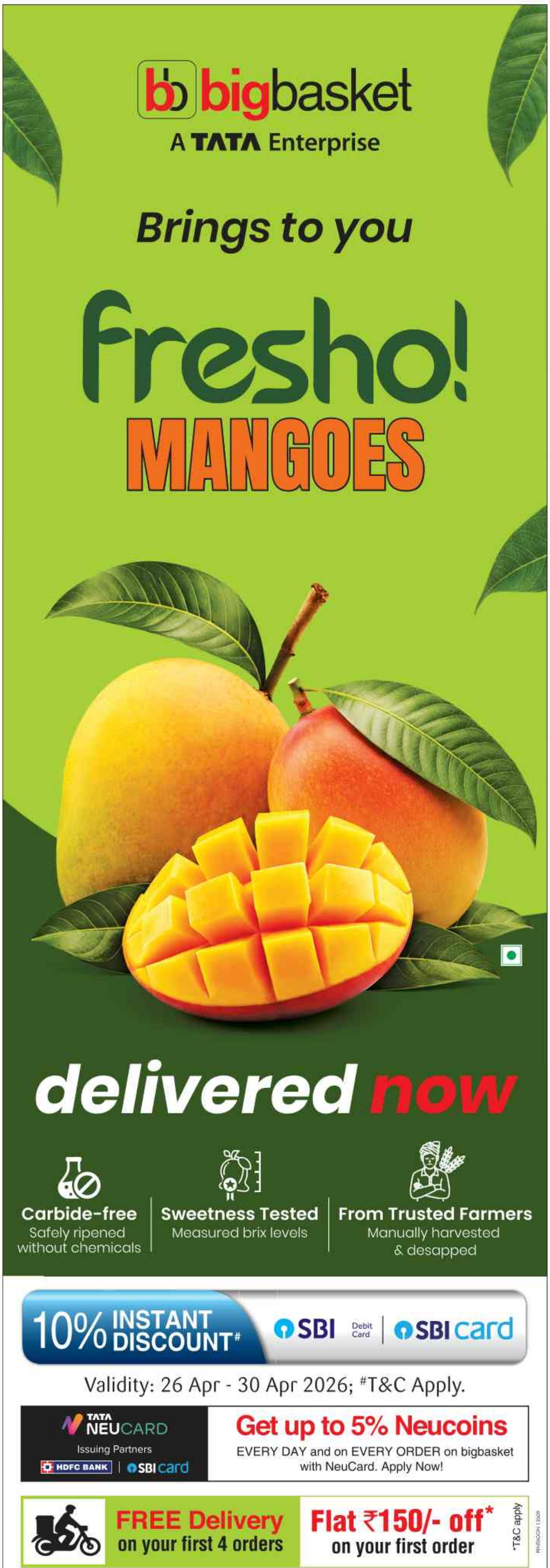

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